

Donated by Mrs. J. M. Hest
Mar. 2, 1920

Sch. R.

Cl 286 Bk D49574

Trinity College Library
Durham, N. C.



mai

Donated 1

00000

Rec'd Jan. 24, 1924

Exchange

2

A HISTORY

OF

GRASSY CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH,

FROM ITS FOUNDATION TO 1880,

WITH

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

OF ITS

Pastors and Ministers.

By ROBERT I. DEVIN.

668 65

RALEIGH :

EDWARDS, BROUGHTON & CO., PRINTERS & BINDERS.

1880.

1/24/24
Exchange with
Walter Forest Col.

Sch. R.
286

1100 set

I 4 5 7

PREFACE.

If the saying is true that "God is in history," it is emphatically true that God is in the history of his people. The recital of their illustrious deeds is proclaiming to the world what God has wrought through their agency. The record of their achievements brings us near to God, and distinctly marks out his ways among the children of men. It shows that God has done great things for mankind by the religion of Christ, and any contribution to this department of human knowledge, however small or circumscribed, is adapted to awaken in thoughtful minds, trains of reflection which may be turned to profitable account.

Grassy Creek is one of the oldest Baptist churches in Upland North Carolina, and was for many years the seat of operations for the denomination in the regions around. There are many interesting facts connected with its early movements, some of which have been lost in the rubbish of time, and others are rapidly sinking into the bosom of oblivion. The writer having been happily connected with the church as pastor for nearly *thirty* years, and naturally feeling a deep interest in its history, was induced to undertake the work of compilation, believing that unless he did, it would probably never be done. The labor, not to say perplexities, in collecting the materials for its preparation, greatly exceeded his calculations; but still he was much interested, and hopes benefited in the investigation; and should the reader enjoy the perusal of its pages, and

66865

be profited by the facts and sentiments expressed, the writer will be amply repaid. Uninfluenced by pecuniary motives, the work was undertaken with an earnest desire to be useful, by contributing something, however small, to the stock of church history. With the best wishes for the prosperity and religious elevation of his fellowmen, the author presents this little work to the public, hoping that it may be of service to the cause of truth and righteousness.

R. I. D.

YOUNGS' \nearrow ROADS, N. C., June, 1830.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
I. A Bird's Eye View of the Early History of North Carolina,	9
II. A Bird's Eye View of the Early History of Granville county,.....	27
III. Distinguishing Principles of the Baptists,.....	29
IV. The Church Covenant and Rules of Decorum,.....	43
V. The Organization of Grassy Creek Baptist Church, and Incidents connected with its Early History,	49
VI. History of the Church derived from its Records, with Interesting Items, and Remarks by the Compiler,	71
VII. Biographical Sketches of its Pastors and the Ministers sent out from the Church,	103

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2012 with funding from

Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act, administered by the State Library of North Carolina. Grant issued to Duke University for the Religion in North Carolina project.

INDEX.

	PAGE.
A party from Spottsylvania county, Va.. united with Grassy Creek Church,.....	56, 57
A remarkable fact,	67, 68
Anxious seats, when they came into use at Grassy Creek Church,	70
A baptismal scene,	98
Anti-ism repulsed,	92
A list of Ministers, Deacons and Clerks,	101, 102
Baptists unjustly dealt with by historians,	16, 30
Baptists, the early history of in North Carolina,.....	17
Baptists divided into Separates and Regulars,	60
Baptists have never persecuted for conscience' sake.....	39
Baptists, a distinct and peculiar people,	29
Baptists, the "Primitive" so-called. their origin,	93
Baptists. the origin of the term,	41
Baptist State Convention of 1839,	95
Baptist pioneers in Middle North Carolina.....	50
Church Covenant,	43
Craig, Elijah	57, 58
Converted church-membership.....	32
Dancing, a worldly amusement interdicted,	81
Division of the Sandy Creek Association,	73, 74
Feet-washing,	64
False doctrine, how treated,	76, 77
Grassy Creek Church, when organized,	53
Grassy Creek Church has ever been missionary,	100
Granville county, when settled,	22
Granville county, when formed,	21
Granville county, its women,	24
Granville county, its hospitality,	24
Granville county, its Baptist element,	26, 27
Individual responsibility in religious matters,	36
Independence, Baptist church polity,	35
Lay-Elders, the office of, in the church,	65
Laying-on-of-hands after baptism,	62
Lord's Supper, the neglect of, how treated,	79, 83
Looseness concerning baptism reprobated.....	90
Long pastorates encouraged,	101
Marriage, the laws regulating it,	11, 12

	PAGE.
Ministerial support in early times,.....	54, 55
Ordinances of the gospel unchangeable,.....	33
Private offences, how treated,.....	78
Public worship, the duty to attend upon,.....	87
Private judgment, the divine right of,.....	36
Rules of Decorum,.....	46
Roanoke Association,.....	85
Revivals, how conducted in early times,.....	69
Separate Baptists, the origin of the cognomen by which they were distinguished,	59
Separate Baptists, union with the Regulars,	61, 77, 78
Soul-liberty, a Baptist doctrine,.....	36
The Bible an all-sufficient guide,.....	30
Talking too freely, how dealt with,.....	89
The churches formed from Grassy Creek,	101
The first newspaper published in North Carolina,.....	11
The sketches of ministers :	
Allen, Zachariah,.....	142
Battle, Elisha.....	118
Baldwin, Moses.....	131
Creath, William	138
Daniel, Robert T.....	120
Harris, Samuel.....	105
King, James.....	127
Lester, Henry	111
Montague, John E.....	145
Marsh, Robert H.....	134
Picket, Reuben,	115
Reed, James.....	103
Richards, William.....	140
Vass, Thomas.....	112
Walker, Sanders.....	136
Whitehead, William.....	137
Worrel, William B.....	123

HISTORY OF GRASSY CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH.

SECTION I.

A Bird's Eye View of the Early History of North Carolina.

The first permanent settlement made in North Carolina by the whites, was in April, 1663, on Durant's Neck, on the north side of Albemarle Sound, in Perquimans county. These colonists came from Virginia, having been driven off by religious persecutions.

In 1665, the proprietary government was established by charter, which, without regret, terminated in 1729. The total population of the colony at this time was about 10,000.

The first legislative body ever called together in North Carolina, termed the *General Assembly*, held its session in 1666, at the house of a Quaker, on Perquimans River. George Durant presided. Up to 1720, the Assembly met at private houses, on the same river, but generally at the house of Capt. Wm.

Sanderson, whose land is now owned by Hon. George Brooks, United States Judge of the Eastern District of North Carolina.

In 1729, the boundary line between North Carolina and Virginia was run under the direction of commissioners appointed by both provinces. The people who lived on the border manifested a good deal of anxiety about the matter, afraid lest the line should pass south of their dwellings, which would compel them to submit to religious intolerance. The laws of conformity were never attempted to be enforced in North Carolina. The people were comparatively free from ecclesiastical oppression. The surveyors reached the bank of Hyco on the 6th of October, at least 50 miles west of the residence of any white inhabitant. Here the North Carolina commissioners left, but the Virginia party continued the work until the 26th of October. The surveying party was so delighted with the beautiful appearance which the face of the country presented; along the borders of Granville and Person, in North Carolina, and Mecklenburg and Halifax in Virginia, that they called it the *Land of Eden*. At this time (1729) there was not a white settler in the county of Halifax, Virginia, and up to 1733, there were only *two*,—Peter Mitchell, in the Fork, between Dan and Staunton rivers, and Aaron Pinson,* on

*Aaron Pinson's name appears on the church book at Grassy Creek among its first members.

the south of Dan, one mile below the mouth of Hyco.

In 1730, the colonial government was established under royal authority. George Burrington was appointed Governor of the Province of North Carolina by the king of England, and the next year he qualified at Edenton, and entered upon the duties of his office.

On the 13th of April, 1731, the first legislative assembly of the province, under the authority of the King, convened at Edenton. During this session the three primary divisions of North Carolina were abolished, and each precinct was denominated a county. Governor Burrington's administration was short and oppressive. To escape the gathering storm, he returned to England.

In 1734, Gabriel Johnston was appointed Governor, and took the oath of office in November of the same year. His administration was the longest, purest, and by far the most prosperous during the colonial existence of North Carolina.

In 1738, the boundary line between North and South Carolina was run.

In 1741, the laws regulating marriage were enacted, making it a civil contract, and authorizing justices of the peace to solemnize the rites of matrimony. The Church of England was in theory, and by law, the established Church in North Carolina till 1776, but there were not many parish ministers

—no persecutions for conscience' sake, while dissenters of all denominations increased rapidly throughout the province, unmolested. But under the old ecclesiastical establishment, no minister could celebrate the rites of matrimony but an Episcopal minister, according to the ceremonies prescribed in the book of Common Prayer. In 1766, the Presbyterian clergy was granted the privilege of celebrating the rite, but Baptist ministers were not allowed to perform the marriage ceremony until the Revolutionary war, when ministers of all religious denominations were put on the same footing.

In 1754, New Berne was the seat of Government. Here the Governor resided, but the Colonial Assembly convened in Wilmington. Arthur Dobbs, who was an Irishman and an ex-member of the Irish Parliament, having been appointed Governor of the province of North Carolina, by King George the Second, who then occupied the British throne, arrived in autumn and entered upon the duties of his office. During his administration there were no violent outbreaks, as it would seem there was no cause for such, but still the public mind was in a state of constant uneasiness; for the people had learned by sad experience that officers who were appointed from abroad were usually unfit for the stations which they held in the colony. Indeed, the great mass of the people were in a state of dissatisfaction and suspense throughout the whole of their colonial exist-

ence. At this time, there was not a newspaper published in North Carolina; but, for the want of mail facilities, such publications would have been almost useless. Even the laws enacted by the Legislature for a long time were not printed—they were published by being publicly read in the hearing of the people at the next court after their passage. In 1764, a committee of the Legislature contracted with Andrew Stuart for the printing of the laws of North Carolina; and James Davis, the printer, having some leisure, undertook the publication of a periodical paper called "The North Carolina Magazine," the first number of which appeared June 1st, 1764. This was the first newspaper ever published in North Carolina.

At this time, (1754) there were very few public buildings for courts, or other public business. There were no post-routes traversed by mail carriers. Even up to 1790, under Gen. Washington's administration, there were only four post offices in North Carolina, namely: Edenton, Newbern, Washington and Wilmington. Letters and papers must be sent by special or private messengers, or by travelers who might by chance be going to the place to which they were directed.

There were, especially in the middle portion of North Carolina, no public roads,—they were mostly only foot-paths from house to house and from settlement to settlement, distinguished by notches in

the trees. The mode of traveling was on horseback with packhorses, carrying the bare necessities of life.

It appears that the relations which subsisted between the whites and natives, were generally most amicable up to the horrid massacre and Indian war of 1711 and 1712. In this, as in almost every other outbreak of the Indians, they were instigated and deluded by bad designing men. It is doubtless true that there is not a State in the Union that has dealt more justly with the aborigines than North Carolina, and not one in which more uniformly friendly relations existed between the whites and natives. Their rights were protected by law; and strangers were prohibited from trading with them. A full title to land could only be acquired by an emigrant after two years' residence in the colony. At this time (1754), Middle or Upland North Carolina was little less than one vast forest, dotted over with small settlements, with a few scattered log cabins intervening, without towns, villages or public highways. The woods were full of wild game of various kinds to allure the huntsman; honey, gathered by the wild bees, was plentiful; swine multiplied and fattened on the fruits of the forest, and cattle increased rapidly on excellent pasturage which was found almost everywhere. Milk, butter and cheese were abundant. About all the planter was required to do, so far as his stock was concerned, was to keep

them gentle and protect them from the beasts of prey. The luxuriant growth of wild pea vines, and other vegetation, which covered the face of the earth, was not sufficiently destroyed by the frosts of winter as to render the feeding of stock necessary. But money was very scarce. Trade was chiefly carried on by barter. Debts were frequently paid in country produce, deer skins, hides, furs, &c. The population of North Carolina at this time (1754) was probably a little over 60,000; but it was increasing very rapidly. Immigrants were pouring in from almost every quarter. They came not from one land, or of one profession, or one religious sect, but from a number of nations, belonging to several religious denominations; and, in general, they were not the adherents of any temporal ecclesiastical hierarchy.

Men of peaceful habits—hunters and fugitives from religious intolerance, with their wives and children—came and quietly settled themselves in different portions of North Carolina. Sometimes they came singly, but generally in small companies and settled in the same vicinity for mutual aid and protection, as well as social enjoyment. Many who were denied soul-liberty in other regions came to enjoy the mild shade of religious toleration in North Carolina. Here the refugee from ecclesiastical oppression could find an asylum—a city of refuge. It is true, that the people were compelled to pay

annually an unrighteous tax to support the Episcopal Clergy, and they were also taxed to purchase glebes, &c., until British rule was forever abolished; but otherwise, so far as the writer is informed, no one was disturbed or persecuted by ecclesiastical domination. Every person was free to worship God, as his own judgment and conscience might approve.

Dr. Hawks, in his history of North Carolina, (vol. ii,) from 1663 to 1729, informs us that there were various religious sects in the colony; such as Scotch Presbyterians, German Lutherans, French Huguenots, Irish Romanists, English Churchmen, New England Congregationalists, and American Quakers, but he does not say one word about the Baptists. Indeed, he has not mentioned anywhere in his book the name by which they are distinguished as a Christian sect; if so, the writer of this has failed to observe it. From his silence in relation to them, the reader might justly conclude that the Baptists had really no existence in the province of North Carolina previous to 1729. But now turn to the list of the jurymen (freeholders) that were in the various precincts in the year 1723, (pp. 62-67,) and you will find the names of at least *four* Baptist preachers, namely: Paul Palmer, Wm. Burgess, Wm. and Joseph Parker, and a considerable number of Baptist laymen. But this distinguished author was, perhaps, so much exercised about the Quakers, that he failed to discover that there were

any Baptists in the colony at that early date. While most of the North Carolina historians are as reticent concerning the Baptists as Dr. Hawks, yet some of them have referred to that denomination, but in such a way as to make the impression that they came into the province about the beginning of the Revolutionary War.

As early as 1695, there were individual Baptists in North Carolina, scattered here and there, in the settlements of the colony. At this time there were in all the province not more than *five thousand* inhabitants.

The first Baptist church known within its bounds was organized in 1727. It was gathered by Elder Paul Palmer, who was a native of Maryland, and baptized by Elder Owen Thomas, the pastor of the church at Welsh Tract, Delaware. Among the names of its male membership are those of Parker, Copeland, Brinkly, Parke, Darker, Welch, Evans, Jordan, Burgess, Burket, and others. This old church, now called Shiloh, is situated on Pasquotank river in the county of Camden. The settled portion of the colony was then (1727) divided into three counties, namely: Albemarle, Bath and Clarendon,—containing in all, *eleven* precincts, and a population little less than *ten thousand*.

In 1752, by the labors of Palmer, Parker, Sojourner, and other ministers raised up in that region, the churches had increased to *sixteen*.

The writer has made some effort to ascertain the number of Baptist churches in the province, in 1776, the year in which the war of the Revolution began in earnest, and from all the light he can find upon the subject, it is evident that there must have been at that time not less than *forty* regularly constituted Baptist churches in North Carolina; besides, a considerable number of branches, which afterwards matured into churches. The records of Grassy Creek Church show that there were several branches of much interest under its supervision, which were not regularly organized until after the close of the war. What was true, in this regard, of this church, was also true of many others. The Sandy Creek Association was organized in 1758, with *nine* churches, and the Kehukee in 1765, with *eight* more, besides some unassociated churches. There were at least *twenty* Baptist churches in North Carolina in 1760, and as the next sixteen years were years of great activity among the ministers, it will be safe to set down the number of Baptist churches in the colony of North Carolina, in 1776, not less than *forty*.

Gov. Tryon is represented to have said that "the Regulators were a faction of Quakers and Baptists, who aimed to overturn the Church of England." The statement is palpably false in two respects: *First*, it was a *civil* and not a religious commotion, and *secondly*, there were really no Baptists among

the Regulators. The Baptist churches were not only free from factions, but they excommunicated any of their members who united with parties in opposition to the government. Among the *four thousand* Regulators who were scattered through Granville, Orange, Guilford, and other counties, where there were many Baptists, *only seven* were found among them, and they were expelled by the advice of the Sandy Creek Association, in 1769, two years before the battle of Alamance.

Bishop Ives, in referring to the war of the Regulators, on a commencement occasion at Chapel Hill, asserted that "the Baptists had persecuted for conscience sake." There is not a shadow of truth in the declaration. (See Bendict's Hist. of Bap., vol. 2, pp. 115, 116; Purefoy's Hist. of Sandy Creek Association; Wheeler's Hist. of N. C.)

It is evident that there were many Baptists in North Carolina anterior to the war of the Revolution, and that they shared largely in that great struggle for Independence.* They then proved themselves to be what they have ever claimed, the friends and firm supporters of political and religious freedom. Their patriotism and bravery were alike fully demonstrated by their steadfast adherence to

*It appears, from all the information the writer can obtain, that the Baptists, to a man, espoused the cause of the Revolution, and freely periled all, in maintaining the independence of the colonies.

the American cause, and the heroic valor which they displayed on the battle-field. It was their lot to stand in the ranks and toil in obscurity, but firmly and efficiently. The share they bore, and the influence they exerted, that helped to infuse liberality in the Constitution as well as in the Bill of Rights, have never been fully appreciated or acknowledged. Their noble deeds, amid the stirring events of that long and bloody contest for life and liberty lie, buried in the ruins of history, where they will probably, for the most part, remain concealed.

The following statistics of the Christian denominations in North Carolina, gathered from the minutes of 1879, may not be exact, but they are very nearly so :

Baptists, Regular,	167,600
“ Anti-Missionary,	9,750
“ Cambellite,	5,970
“ Free-Will,	6,516
Methodists, Episcopal,	77,175
“ Episcopal, (colored,)	33,400
“ Protestant,	13,500
Presbyterians,	17,750
Episcopalians,	5,540
Lutherans,	about 10,000
Christian, (O’Kellyite,)	4,600
Quakers,	4,850
Moravians,	2,000
Roman Catholics,	about 1,000

SECTION II.

Bird's Eye View of the Early History of
Granville County.

Granville county was formed from Edgecombe in 1746, and was so named in honor of the Earl of Granville, the owner of the soil. When it was first established, it embraced a very large territory, comprehending Warren and Franklin counties on the east, and extending to the Pacific Ocean on the west. The following is a list of the names of officers of the county as organized in 1746, namely: Wm. Person, 1st Sheriff; Robert Foster, Clerk; Robert Jones, Jr., King's Attorney; Wm. Eaton, William Person, James Payne, Edw'd Jones, Edw'd Martin, John Wade, Lemuel Lanier, Gideon Macon, John Brantly, West Harris, Lemuel Henderson, and Jonathan White, Justices of the Peace. The court at first held its sessions in a private house on the plantation of Wm. Eaton.

In 1749, a court house and jail were built by contract, for £150 Virginia currency. The dimensions of the court house were 32 feet long, 20 feet wide, and 11 feet pitch, with two windows on each side, and one window in each end above stairs, with shutters, but without glass. The jail was 20 feet long and 10 feet wide. That remarkable good order

prevailed in Granville at this early period, is naturally inferred from the scanty provision made by the court for the safe keeping of criminals.

The court house was located in what is now Warren county, seven miles above Gaston, on Rocky Creek, near Boiling Spring. Bute county was formed from Granville in 1764, which was, in 1779, divided into Warren and Franklin, and the name of Bute was obliterated from the list of counties in North Carolina. Granville being reduced in 1764 to its present dimensions, the place for holding its courts was removed some two miles above the town of Henderson, at the mouth of Mr. Brodie's lane, on the road leading to Oxford, where one or two terms of the court were held, when it was removed to Harrisburg, and after holding one court, it was removed to Oxford about 1769.

From the best information the writer has been able to obtain, it appears that Granville, as it now is, began to be settled about 1715 ; and about this date the Indians, the Red Men of the forest, migrated and left the whites in the unmolested possession of the soil. Among the first settlements, which were effected in Granville, were those along its northern border on Nutbush and Grassy Creek, and on Tar River.

As in all frontier regions, the houses of the first settlers in Granville were mostly log-huts, which required but few tools, and very little skill in their erection. The axe, the augur, and the saw, were

deemed sufficient in building these rude structures. They, with dirt and stick chimneys, covered with clap boards, hung on laths by wooden pegs, with doors turning on wooden hinges, and with locks made of the same material, were finished without iron work or nails. If the homestead was enclosed at all, it was with a rail fence or pales, which were wattled or wreathed in and out, making a firm fence, but as destitute of iron as the house which it surrounded. The articles of furniture within were few, and as roughly constructed as the building which contained them. They consisted of a few stools, a bedstead, a corner cupboard, containing some pewter plates, dishes, &c., and at that time, two other very important articles, a spinning wheel and a loom. But better houses with brick chimneys gradually arose, which were supplied with a better class of furniture. With the early emigrants, a number of mechanics, such as carpenters, masons, blacksmiths, tanners, hatters, and weavers, came into Granville and settled in various parts of the county. But agriculture was the principal business of the people. All were in some way connected with the cultivation of the soil. This was necessarily so from its local position. The principal articles cultivated were, then as now, corn, wheat and tobacco. The citizens could then live well with comparatively little labor, as Indian corn yielded abundantly, and

meat was obtained without much pains, besides the woods afforded plenty of wild game.

As to the women,* all bear strong testimony to their virtue and industrious habits. In many instances they not only performed the household work, but also a large portion of what was done on the farm. Besides the work of the dairy, they kept the spinning-wheel and the loom busily employed. The domestic cloth, manufactured by their hands, out of their own cotton, wool and flax, served to keep their families decently clad. Dressed deer-skins were also much used in making garments. This was a common article in the apparel of the woodsman. The early settlers of Granville were remarkable for their kind and generous hospitality. This noble characteristic of their ancestors they still maintain. In regard to the amusements in which the people indulged, the writer would simply say, besides hunting and fishing, that dancing, foot-

*The first white woman who came into Granville was Abigail Sagan, a French Huguenot. She married a man by the name of Cook, who was so improvident that his wife was under the necessity of swaddling their first born with old meal sacks hastily gathered up at his little mill. Cook having died, she married the second time, a man by the name of Christmas, who lived at the place now known as Jones' White Sulphur Springs, in Warren county. *Five* of her descendants were Generals in the Confederate Army, and *three* are now distinguished members of the United States Senate, namely: Ransom of North Carolina, Harris of Tennessee, and Cockrill of Mississippi.

racing, quoits, horse-racing, shooting-matches, &c., were among the most common sports of that day.

The patriotism of Granville, for which it has ever been noted, shone brightly in the war of the Revolution. The county afforded quite a number of men, whose names are conspicuous in the annals of heroism, who distinguished themselves for wisdom in counsel and courage on the field of carnage during that long and terrible struggle for life and liberty, while the mass of the people gave their constant and hearty support to the cause of freedom. John Penn, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, was a resident of Granville. He lived in the vicinity of Grassy Creek meeting-house (some 6 miles distant.) He was not himself a member of any church, but several of his servants were members of the church at Grassy Creek.

It appears that a very large proportion of the early settlers were from Virginia, and were either Baptists or Presbyterians in religious sentiment. That there was a healthy religious sentiment pervading the early colonists of Granville, is evident from the fact that ministers of the Gospel, upon whom rested no suspicion of secular motives for preaching, seldom failed to obtain large congregations in all the settlements they visited.

At the time when Grassy Creek Church was founded, by far the larger portion of the county was a wilderness, with here and there a settlement, in-

terspersed with log cabins, and small cleared fields. There were no public roads or mail facilities; for, in 1812, Williamsboro was the only post office in the county, and up to 1816, there were only three: Williamsboro, Oxford, and Lemay's X Roads.

Among the early Baptists in Granville, there were some men of means, but the most of them were in the humble walks of life—moderate in their pretensions, coveting no positions of worldly honor, or titles of rank. Having been harrassed and persecuted for conscience' sake, in the land of their nativity or adoption, they came to North Carolina to find repose and gladly moved along in the retired paths of life, having as little to do in public political affairs as possible, asking only to be allowed to worship God as they judged right, unmolested. Their influence was efficient in assisting to give that religious and moral tone to society, for which Granville has been noted. They were as a strong under-current, which but seldom appears upon the surface, but still it is not the less powerful. They have abundantly proved themselves to be eminent alike for their patriotism and Christianity.

Seeing, then, that many of the first settlers of Granville were Baptists, consequently, as might be expected, there has ever existed a strong Baptist element in the county. The number and influence of the denomination have kept pace with the increase of its population. The Baptists at a very

early period, gained important and permanent standing in society, which they have with the Divine blessing, maintained up to the present time. They, as a denomination, have, amid the fluctuations of time, been preserved from error and division. The steady and uniform course which they have pursued, affords convincing proof of the intelligence and excellency of the character of the founders and adherents of the denomination. There are now eighteen white Baptist churches in the county, with a membership of 2,200. These churches are working together harmoniously, lending their aid to every benevolent enterprise for extending the kingdom of Christ in the world, and whose membership constitutes a noble band of brethren—in doctrinal sentiment—sound in the faith. The Baptist churches of Granville will, perhaps, compare favorably in numbers, piety, intelligence and respectability, with any other like number of churches in the land.



SECTION III.

Distinguishing Principles of Baptists.

There is a class of religious people in our midst who are distinguished by some noted peculiarities in their belief and practice. They are called Baptists. In what particulars do they differ from other Christian denominations? In connection with some notes on the history of Grassy Creek Baptist Church, I shall give a brief sketch of the general features of the Baptists, as a denomination, which make them a distinct people, marked and peculiar. It is not my purpose to defend, but simply to state their distinguishing religious views. In regard to what are usually termed the great fundamental doctrines of Christianity, they agree, in most points, with other sects commonly called *evangelical*. But there are some important religious principles which they hold very sacred, and which constitute and determine them a separate people. For the want of correct information concerning their principles and practices they have been, and are still, sadly misrepresented, defamed and vilified. No other sect has suffered more from partiality and intolerance than the Baptists, or to so large a measure of calumny, reproach and persecution. They have ever been objects of derision and sneer, and made to suffer severe

and unjust penalties for adherence to the dictates of conscience. It is a fact that cannot be denied, that there is not any work of history, written by men not of Baptist belief, that does not contain defective or perverted statements, in relating transactions in which Baptists bore an important part. Even common fairness has been denied them, and, not unfrequently, they are passed by unnoticed. It is not surprising, therefore, that even good men should be led astray by prejudice, when so many partial or false statements are made by the writers they are accustomed to read, and to whom they have recourse concerning that sect that is everywhere spoken against. The Baptists have always been desirous to be understood by others as they understand themselves.

I. The Baptists maintain that *the Bible*, as given by the inspiration of God, *is the only rule of faith and practice.*

They hold that the plain, obvious teachings of the Holy Scriptures alone are binding on the conscience in all matters of religion, and that no human creed or exposition whatever has any such authority. They have no authoritative human creed, confession of faith, or catechisms to bind them together in doctrine and church discipline. A creed is more than worthless—it is dishonoring to God—if it is not founded on the word of God, and if it is, why not rest on that word—the true foundation it-

self instead of resting on the scaffolding erected upon it. The Baptists prefer to stand on the foundation itself. If it is able to sustain them they need no other, and if it is not, they cannot rest upon a creed that has no support for itself. ✓ But do not all other religious denominations profess to hold the sacred Scriptures to be the true standard of religious belief and practice? Certainly; but the most of them use other authorities in regulating their religious practices and ecclesiastical decisions. Do they not appeal to their creeds, confessions of faith, or books of discipline, as standards in doctrine and church order. Do they not regulate their church affairs by these human compilations? But do not the Baptists, as well as other sects, have and use a confession of faith? Some Baptist churches have what are called "Declarations of Faith," as simple statements of what they believe the Bible teaches in regard to doctrine, church order, &c., but they are not put forth by any ecclesiastical authority, nor are they in the least binding on the consciences of their church members. Many Baptist churches, (Grassy Creek is one among that number,) have never adopted such Articles of Faith because they have not found any need for them. These compends of faith do not constitute the bond of union among the Baptists, nor are they a standard in any sense, by which individuals or parties, whether ministers or private members, are tried, either for heresy or un-

godly conduct. They are put forth to furnish information to the people, especially, for the benefit of those who are ignorant of Baptist views and usage. Jesus Christ is the only king and law-giver in Zion. The law of the Lord is perfect. The Baptists have always persistently held the sufficiency of the Scriptures, and invariably refused to receive or follow any and all forms of tradition whatever. They yield their consciences to the authority of God's word, and to that only. The holy Bible is emphatically the Creed, the Confession of Faith and the Book of Discipline of all true Baptist churches.

II. The Baptists steadfastly maintain *the doctrine of a regenerated church membership.*

An individual is regenerated by the sovereign influence of the Holy Spirit, leading him by faith to receive the benefits of the Savior's atonement. No external ceremony can effect this radical change in the heart, or constitute any one a new creature in Christ Jesus. No person is qualified, however amiable and upright, for membership in a regular Baptist church, unless he has obtained the forgiveness of his sins by faith in the merits of a crucified Redeemer. He must satisfy the church that he has experienced a work of grace upon his heart and been truly converted to God, before he can be admitted to the ordinances of the gospel, or participate in the privileges of church-membership. The Baptists believe in a spiritual church, and would exclude from

it every thing that does not worship God in spirit and in truth. In a word, they claim that according to the New Testament pattern, a church is composed exclusively of regenerated men and women, baptized upon a profession of faith in Christ, and observing all things which Christ, the great Law-giver in Zion, has commanded. A converted church membership is one of the great principles which the Baptists have ever zealously maintained.

III. The Baptists maintain that *the ordinances of Christ*, as he enjoined them in number, mode, order and symbolic meaning, *are unchanged and unchangeable till He comes.* 912

There are two ordinances of the gospel, *baptism* and the *Lord's Supper*. They are institutions of Divine authority, and are to be kept as they were delivered to us. The Baptists hold that according to the New Testament, none are proper subjects of baptism but believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. A credible profession of faith is a pre-requisite to baptism, and baptism is indispensable to church membership and participation at the Lord's table. They reject infant baptism, not only because there is neither precept nor example for it in the New Testament, but because they are incapable of believing, and also because it violates the fundamental principles involved in the doctrine of personal liberty and individual responsibility which they hold to be essential in religious matters. While they believe

that all infants, dying in infancy, are saved through the atoning blood of Jesus, still they do not believe that they are the subjects of gospel ordinances. The Baptists claim that they observe the ordinances as commanded by Christ, and practiced by the apostolic churches. All rites and forms in Divine worship, as laid down in the New Testament, must be performed as the great Head of the Church has directed; without change or substitution for convenience. Whatever the master has required must be done.

Baptists contend for the exact performance of the act of baptism according to the divine command, and, in this, they contend for a principle that applies with equal force to every divine institution; therefore they hold that immersion is the only gospel baptism. In regard to restricted communion, their practice is consistent, and logically follows from their views of baptism. What others call baptism, they believe to be only a substitute for it. A valid gospel baptism, according to Romans 6:4, is the burial of a believer upon his own profession of faith in Christ. The Lord's Supper is administered according to Gospel order, to those only who have believed and are baptized. Baptism and the Lord's Supper are of equal authority and benefit. Both are symbolic. Baptism proclaims the death and resurrection of Christ, and the Lord's Supper shows forth his death till he comes. These are the two great monumental pillars of Christianity which pro-

claim Christ's glorious work, for the redemption of this lost and sin-cursed world.

IV. The Baptists, in their government, maintain *church independency*.

The term independent, when applied to churches, has a technical meaning; that is, each church is complete in itself, being subject to no higher ecclesiastical authority, and competent to perform every act of government. The Baptist denomination is not a church, but a body of churches; for each one is independent of each other in all things that pertain to its government. It is just as competent to discharge all its duties as if no other church existed. The church possesses no legislative authority. Jesus is king. He has given to the church his laws which she is to preserve and obey just as he has made them, without any alteration or limitation. Her duties, so far as the laws which govern Christ's kingdom are concerned, are all executive in their nature. A church of Christ is invested with executive power to carry out the sovereign will of its Head. The governmental authority is in the hands of the people. It is a pure democracy. Each church chooses its own pastor and other officers, receives and dismisses its own members, and conducts its own discipline, without the agency of any other authority. Each congregation manages its own affairs as they may judge best, without being amenable to any other ecclesiastical body. Associations

and conventions have no authority whatever over the churches. They are a body of churches united together on voluntary principles for fraternal and missionary purposes. As church-members, entire equality prevails among the Baptist brotherhood. This simple, independent form of church government, the Baptists believe, is according to the New Testament model.

V. The Baptists hold that *a man is responsible to God alone for his faith and practice.*

The doctrine of entire freedom of conscience stands out in bold relief upon every page of Baptist history. Soul-liberty is the inalienable right of every human being. Christianity demands voluntary obedience. Religious duties and a profession of faith in Christ, are personal matters between the individual and his Saviour, and must be the acts of a voluntary being. Therefore, God has given to every person the right to search the Scriptures, and interpret them for himself. The liberty granted to every man to think for himself, or the right of private judgment in the investigation of God's word, does not give him the right to follow his own fancies and predilections, to speculate and diverge from its teachings, to disobey or doubt it, but to understand its facts and truths, as they are revealed, that he may honestly and intelligently follow them in obedience. By what shadow of authority can any man, or class of men, presume to step between the

personal investigations of a man and the Bible, to interpret it for him. No mortal man has any right to settle the religious opinions of other persons, or determine their church relations. Neither the civil magistrate, nor the State, has any right to prescribe a form of religion for the people, or to punish them for not following the forms so prescribed. The Baptists have ever denied the right of a State to establish the church by law, and opposed all acts of religious conformity as iniquitous and oppressive, which interfere with the free exercise of a man's religion, be it what it may. So far as civil law is concerned, if a man chooses, he has a right to be a Pagan, a Mohammedan, or an Infidel. They regard all church establishments—the union of Church and State—as radically wrong in principle; and all forms of persecution—the legitimate results of such unholy alliances—as wicked. All State and National Churches are utterly inconsistent with the genius of Christianity, and the declaration of the Saviour himself, who said, "My kingdom is not of this world."

That soul-liberty which we now enjoy, the Baptists obtained at a great price—the dungeon, the rack, the stake and the gibbet. The time was when this distinguishing principle of Baptist belief—the entire separation of the State from religious opinions and practice—was practically unknown in every colony in North America except Rhode Island. Here soul-liberty was guaranteed by law,

and enjoyed by every one, to its fullest extent. But now it is one of the great foundation laws of every State in our National Union, which secures to every individual the right of religious freedom—and have not the Baptists just claims as pioneers in this great reform in civil government?

History abundantly proves that the Baptists have in every age been the advocates and firm supporters of religious liberty. When the Emperor Constantine, in 313, sent commissioners to the Donatists (who were doubtless Baptists,) to conciliate them and induce them if possible to return to the established church, they replied, "What has the Emperor to do with the church?"

God alone is the great arbiter of conscience, having given to no created being, be he prince or potentate, any authority to say what religious faith a man must profess.

John Locke said, "The Baptists were from the beginning the firm advocates of absolute liberty—just and true liberty, equal and impartial liberty."

James McIntosh, Jeremy Taylor, and other distinguished writers, speak of the Baptists in similar terms. Washington the statesman, Story the jurist, and Bancroft the historian, all award to the Baptists marked distinction as the strong defenders of soul-liberty. In the mighty struggle for religious freedom, the Baptists not only stood single handed and alone, but in opposition to all other religious sects.

The great battle for soul-liberty was fought on the American shores, and in it they suffered, bled and died. The glorious victory was achieved, and soul-liberty acknowledged as the birthright of every human being. At this day all evangelical denominations embrace this peculiar Baptist principle.

It has been asserted "that the reason why the Baptists were such firm advocates for soul-liberty, was the smallness of their number, and the little social and political influence which they ever possessed, and that if they had held the power they would have been as intolerant and as persecuting as those by whom they were persecuted; in a word, the reason they did not persecute for conscience' sake was they did not have the power."

This view is false, and utterly inconsistent with their principles. It arises from ignorance. The Baptists cannot persecute for conscience' sake without renouncing some of their peculiar and foundation principles, and the moment that is done they at once cease to be Baptists. Immersion alone does not make any one a Baptist, but the reception and support of those great, vital and distinguishing principles above mentioned are necessary to constitute a man a true Baptist. The writer does not intend to say that the Baptists are and have always been personally too good to be intolerant, but that the principles of personal liberty and opposition to all union of Church and State, which they have held

from time immemorial, make it impossible that they should persecute.

I will notice a few facts to show that the Baptists have adhered practically to their avowed principles. Rhode Island was colonized by Baptists, and had its government in their own hands. They incorporated themselves a body politic, in 1638, and bound themselves together by moral and religious principles. Were they intolerant? Did they ever persecute anybody for conscience' sake? On the contrary, freedom in religious opinions and practices, was, in its fullest extent, ever guaranteed to every citizen. The Baptists have uniformly rejected State patronage, and even such favors that had a tendency towards the least connection between Church and State.

The King of Holland did at one time offer to the Baptists State patronage, and support, but they promptly declined having any alliance whatever with the government. They kindly but firmly rejected the overture.

In Georgia, in 1785, the Legislature passed a law for the establishment and support of religion, embracing all denominations. The Baptists were more numerous than any other in the State, and of course Baptist ministers might have shared largely in the appropriations, and lived handsomely on the public treasury, but the Baptists earnestly remonstrated against it, and the same year sent messengers to the

Legislature to urge its repeal, and the law was without delay repealed.

One other remark, in the language of another, respecting the origin of the name Baptists: "It has been asserted that the Baptists originated in Germany about the year 1522, at the beginning of the Reformation. It is true that no denomination of Protestants can trace the origin of its present name farther back than about the time of the Reformation; and the most of them have originated since that period. And it appears to be true that the *name of Baptists*, by which this people have since been known, *was then first assumed*, probably in opposition to that of Anabaptists, with which their enemies were constantly reproaching them. It is not, however, the history of a name, but the prevalence of principles, which is the just object of attention with the student of ecclesiastical history. The Baptists do not pretend that the primitive saints were called Baptists, but that all the primitive Christians were what would *now* be called by this name; and there always has been a people on earth from the introduction of Christianity, who have held the leading sentiments by which they now are, and always have been, distinguished, is a point which they most firmly believe, and undertake to prove." *Ency. Relig. Knowl.*, page 188.

SECTION IV.

The Church Covenant.

(Supposed to have been written by Elder Shubael Stearns, about 1757.)

Holding believers' baptism; the laying on of hands; particular election of grace by the predestination of God in Christ; effectual calling by the Holy Ghost; free justification through the imputed righteousness of Christ; progressive sanctification through God's grace and truth; the final perseverance, or continuance of the saints in grace; the resurrection of these bodies after death, at that day which God has appointed to judge the quick and dead by Jesus Christ, by the power of God, and by the resurrection of Christ; and life everlasting. Amen.

1st. We do, as in the presence of the great and everlasting God, who knows the secrets of all hearts, and in the presence of angels and men, acknowledge ourselves to be under the most solemn covenant with the Lord, to live for him and no other. We take the only living and true God to be our God, one God in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

2d. We receive the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the revealed mind and will of God, believing them to contain a perfect rule for our faith and practice, and promise through the

assistance of the Holy Spirit, to make them the rule of our life and practice, in all church discipline, acknowledging ourselves by nature children of wrath, and our hope of mercy with God, to be only through the righteousness of Jesus Christ, apprehended by faith.

3dly. We do promise to bear with one another's infirmities and weaknesses, with much tenderness, not discovering them to any in the church, but by gospel rule and order, which is laid down in Matthew 18: 15, 16, 17.

4th. We do believe that God has ordained that they who preach the gospel shall live of the gospel; and we call heaven and earth to witness that we without the least reserve, give up ourselves, through the help and aiding grace of God's Spirit, our souls and bodies and all that we have to this one God, to be entirely at his disposal, both ourselves, our names and estates, as God shall see best for his own glory; and that we will faithfully do, by the help of God's Spirit, whatsoever our consciences, influenced by the word and Spirit of God, shall direct to be our duty, both to God and man; and we do, by the assistance of Divine grace, unitedly give up ourselves to one another in covenant, promising by the grace of God to act towards one another as brethren in Christ, watching over one another in the love of God, especially to watch against all jesting, light and foolish talking which are not convenient, (Eph.

5: 4)—everything that does not become the followers of the holy Lamb of God; and that we will seek the good of each other, and the church universally, for God's glory; and hold communion together in the worship of God, in the ordinances and discipline of this church of God, according to Christ's visible kingdom, so far as the providence of God admits of the same: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is," but submitting ourselves unto the discipline of the church, as a part of Christ's mystical body, according as we shall be guided by the word and Spirit of God, and by the help of Divine grace, still looking for more light from God, as contained in the Holy Scriptures, believing that there are greater mysteries to be unfolded and shine in the church, beyond what she has ever enjoyed: looking and waiting for the glorious day when the Lord Jesus shall take to himself his great power, and "have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth."

This Covenant we make with full and free consent of our minds, believing that through free and boundless grace, it is owned of God and ratified in heaven, before the throne of God and the Lamb. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. Amen, and amen.

Rules of Decorum,

(Prepared by Elder Thomas Vass, and adopted by the church,
January, 1796.)

We, the Baptist Church of Christ at Grassy Creek, being convinced that there is a necessity for meeting together at least once a month for the purpose of keeping up gospel order amongst us, agree to meet on Saturday before the fourth Sunday in each month for that purpose; and as such meetings, as well as all others, ought to be conducted in the fear of God, it is thought proper that some rules should be adopted, to which strict attention should be given:

ART. 1st. We agree that there shall be a Moderator chosen for the purpose of keeping good order, and to conduct the business that may come before the conference.

ART. 2d. That it is the indispensable duty of every member, especially the males, to give due attendance at the said meetings, except prevented by the weather, sickness, or some extraordinary business, that cannot be done before or after. The member who fails to attend is to assign his reason for his failure at the next church meeting, and if the church thinks the reason is sufficient, the brother will take his seat; but if not: for the *first time*, he is to be admonished by the moderator, for the *second* to receive a public reproof, and for the *third time*,

(without sufficient reasons), is to be looked upon as a disorderly member, and dealt with as such, and if he cannot be reclaimed, is to be put away from among us.

ART. 3d. That we will determine all matters which may come before us by a majority of the church, and the minority peaceably submitting.

ART. 4. That it is the duty of all the members present, both male and female, to take their seats in order, to hear and do the business that may come before us, and being seated, should not leave without some urgent necessity, until the meeting is closed.

ART. 5th. That while we are sitting together to do business, no member is to be whispering, reading books, or papers; but all should duly attend to what may be said, that each one may be ready to offer light, or give the necessary instruction upon the subject under consideration, for mutual edification and comfort, so that all things may be done decently and in order.

ART. 6th. That a member, having anything to communicate to the church, must arise from his seat, and while speaking is not to be interrupted by any other member.

ART. 7th. That no member shall leave the meeting to go home or elsewhere, without obtaining leave from the church, under the penalty of being reprov'd for so doing.

ART. 8th. That the meetings of the church shall be opened and closed with solemn prayer to God, for the divine blessing upon our feeble efforts to promote his cause, by the Moderator or some other brother invited by him to discharge that duty.

ART. 9th. We agree that no member shall speak more than twice on the same subject without permission from the church.

ART. 10th. That these rules are to be lodged in the hands of our Clerk, with the other papers of the church, which he shall bring with him to our regular meetings, in order to be read whenever required.

SECTION V.

The origin of Grassy Creek Baptist Church, with some interesting Incidents connected with its Early History.

Some of the first permanent settlements effected in Granville county, North Carolina, were along the Northern border on Grassy Creek, near the Virginia line. It appears that a considerable number of the early colonists in this region were Baptists, or Baptists in sentiment. They soon began to hold meetings and at length built a house [a large frame building] for divine worship, and named it Grassy Creek, after the water course—a tributary of the Roanoke River—on which it was located. The Meeting House is situated in the northern part of Granville, sixteen miles from Oxford, the county seat, and some two miles from the line of Mecklenburg county in Virginia.

As to the exact date when this church began to be founded, I have not been able to learn, but it must have been at least as early as 1754. After diligent enquiry by the best information which I have been able to obtain, (there was doubtless a Baptist meeting-house on Grassy Creek in 1755.) It is stated as one of the undisputed facts in

history that (Rev. Hugh McAden, a Presbyterian minister, did, on his way south, "preach at the Baptist church at Grassy Creek on 14th of August, in 1755." Although the Baptists at that time possessed a house for religious worship, yet it does not appear that the church had been regularly constituted. The records of the church, previous to October, 1769, cannot be found.) Who were its constituent members, or who was its first clerk, I have not been able to learn. (The date of its organization, as given by Benedict and other Baptist historians, is in 1762-'65. They are doubtless mistaken about it, having been led into error by their correspondents, who fixed the date by mere conjecture, without investigation.) While it is true that in the absence of the records of the church in its first movements, the precise period of its regular constitution must remain a matter of conjecture, still, from the facts gathered up, and by construction, it can be approximated.

• About 1754 a small company of Baptists, with Elder Shubael Stearns at their head, set out from New England on a Southern excursion to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation in portions of our country, which were more destitute of the preached gospel. These Baptist pioneers in their benevolent enterprise, with hearts burning with zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of sinners, at one time halt to preach the gospel of the kingdom and

plant the standard of the cross, and at another time push forward to regions beyond, both increasing and diminishing their number at every stage of their sojourn, until the long line of travel terminated in 1771, in the settlement of Elder Daniel Marshall, with other Baptist emigrants, on the Kiokee, a frontier region of Georgia. All along their course they preached the blessed gospel of Jesus, and promulgated Baptist faith and practice. They planted churches of Christ, and then left a part of their company as preachers or exhorters to carry forward the Master's work. Elder Stearns permanently settled on Sandy Creek in Guilford (now Randolph) county, North Carolina, in 1755. I think it more than probable that this company of Baptist pioneers, or a part of them, passed through this very section on their way south, sometime in 1754, and paused for a while to raise the Redeemer's standard and propagate the glorious gospel of the blessed God.

(It is evident that Rev. Daniel Marshall, the coadjutor of Elder Stearns, who came into North Carolina with him, visited this section of the country very soon after his arrival, and labored efficiently and zealously for the upbuilding of Zion and the conversion of souls. His preaching at this place (Grassy Creek) was crowned with a large measure of success. Large and attentive congregations waited upon his ministrations, and many were converted to

God through his instrumentality, and among the number was James Reed, a man of considerable gifts, but very illiterate, who at once began to exhort the people to flee from the wrath to come, and shortly afterwards entered the ministry, and became the first pastor of this church.

At what precise period Mr. Marshall made his first visit to the Grassy Creek section cannot now be determined, but he was, without question, here on a preaching tour in 1756.) Elder Stearns traveled extensively in Virginia and North Carolina after he settled at Sandy Creek, and he, doubtless, visited this community which was then an inviting field for evangelical labors, in his preaching excursions after he came into this colony.

I cannot, ascertain with any degree of certainty that he was at Grassy Creek earlier than 1757, when he visited the church and explained to the brethren his plan of forming an Association. He showed them its necessity for extending the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom, and urged the importance of sending messengers to Sandy Creek meeting house in January, 1758, for the purpose of organizing a Baptist Association. The delegates were appointed according to his request, and the Association was organized at the time designated.

✓ Elder James Reed, who was baptized about the year 1756, by Elder Stearns, and ordained to the ministry probably in 1757, was a delegate from

Grassy Creek to the first meeting of the Sandy Creek Association in 1758.) He says in a manuscript which he left: "At our first Association we continued together three or four days; great crowds of people attended, mostly through curiosity. The great power of God was among us; the preaching every day seemed to be attended with God's blessing. We carried on our Association with sweet decorum and fellowship to the end. Then we took our leave of one another with many solemn charges from our reverend old father, Shubael Stearns, to stand fast unto the end."

From the foregoing facts and considerations, I have arrived at the conclusion that Grassy Creek Baptist Church was regularly constituted some time between 1755 and 1758, probably in 1757, by Elders Shubael Stearns and Daniel Marshall.

This church continued in connection with the Sandy Creek Association till 1770—a space of twelve years—when it was, by mutual consent, divided. This wide-spread community frequently held its annual sessions with this church.

The church, very soon after it was founded, became a strong and flourishing body, having a good house of worship for that day, with a large membership, many of whom possessed considerable wealth and occupied a high social position. At this early date the members were much scattered over the country, both in Virginia and North Carolina—

some living fifty miles or more from the location of the church.

It was for many years the seat of operations for the denomination in this region. It was the centre of a radius extending forty miles or more in almost every direction. It spread out its arms or *branches** on every side, which rapidly matured into churches, and Grassy Creek soon became the mother of many daughters.

Most of our ministers in those early times were very deficient on the score of education, but they were full of zeal, energy, enterprise, and perseverance. With ardent piety and firm faith in God, they went forth proclaiming the gospel, exposed as they were to great hardships and privations, and for the most part, without fee or reward, except a good conscience and the Divine blessing. Their labors, however, were abundant and successful.

The early Baptist churches made but little provision for the support of their pastors. The preachers themselves were much to blame in the matter. In denouncing church establishments as wrong, and the clergy that was supported by taxation as mere hirelings, for the want of correct discrimination, they unwittingly inculcated unscriptural views upon the subject of ministerial support, and some went even

*A *branch* is a company of the members that hold meetings elsewhere, but are not regularly organized into a church,

so far as to refuse receiving *anything* for preaching the gospel, choosing to support themselves and their families the best they could by secular engagements.) In avoiding one extreme they fell into another. They not only injured themselves and impaired their usefulness in declining to receive the "reward" to which the Saviour said the workman is justly entitled, but they inflicted much injury upon the churches by encouraging the spirit of selfishness, which muzzles the ox that treads out the corn.

For a period of a century and a quarter, notwithstanding so many churches have been either wholly or partly formed out of this one, and the civil commotions, the calamities of several wars and the various other vicissitudes through which it has passed, still under the blessing of God it has maintained up to the present a large membership, who have been faithful to the truth, and contended earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. This church, as a place for public worship from its early history, has been particularly noted for the large congregations that attend upon its meetings.

Rev. Samuel Harris, usually called Col. Harris, a man of wealth, ability and high social position, who resided in Pittsylvania county, Virginia, not far from the head of Birch Creek (commonly called Kentuck) Baptist meeting-house, some sixty miles from this place, (Grassy Creek) entered the ministry in 1759, but owing to some peculiar views which

he entertained respecting ordination, he refused to be set apart to the ministerial office till 1769. In 1765, Mr. Harris went down into Orange and Spottsylvania counties, Virginia, on a preaching excursion. His labors were greatly blessed in awakening attention to the subject of religion, and in leading precious souls to Christ. "He continued many days, preaching from place to place, attended by great crowds, and followed throughout his meetings by several persons who had been either lately converted, or seriously awakened under the ministry of others, and also by many who had been alarmed by his own labors.

When Mr. Harris left them he advised some in whom he discovered talents to commence the exercise of their gifts, and to hold meetings among themselves. They took his advice and began to hold meetings every Sabbath, and almost every night in the week, taking a tobacco house for their meeting house. After proceeding in this way for some time, they resolved to send for Mr. Harris, in order to procure his services, to preach and baptize new converts. Sometime in the year 1766, Elijah Craig and two others traveled to Mr. Harris' house, but they found to their surprise that he had not been ordained to the administration of the ordinances. To remedy this inconvenience, he carried them about sixty miles into North Carolina to Elder

James Reed, by whom he (Mr. Craig) was ordained.” (See Benedict’s Hist. of the Baptists, p. 648.)

From the best information that I have been able to obtain in regard to this affair, referred to above, it appears that Mr. Harris conducted this party that came from Spottsylvania county, Virginia, to Grassy Creek, where they were received by experience and baptism into the fellowship of the church. Mr. Craig, one of the party, had, from the time of his conversion, although unbaptized and without church relations, been exercising his gifts in exhortation, and in proclaiming to his fellow men the glad tidings of salvation. He was not only baptized, but was also, at the same time, by the authority of this church, solemnly and publicly set apart to the full work of the gospel ministry, by Elders James Reed and (supposed to be) Dutton Lane. Mr. Reed, the pastor of this church, and some of its members with Mr. Harris, by urgent solicitations, accompanied these brethren back, to receive and baptize converts, and establish a branch of this church in Spottsylvania county, Va. By the way, two of the most prominent and influential members of this church at that time were brothers of Col. Harris—Richard and Charles Harris. The former was an elder or deacon, and the latter its clerk for many years;—and as they were men of means and standing, it is probable that one or both of them were in the delegation. And after making the necessary prepara-

tions, they set out on their journey of nearly two hundred miles. Accordingly, in due time, they reached the place of destination, and commenced their labors with remarkable success. Elder Reed baptized nineteen on the first day of his arrival, and more on the days following. Prosperity smiled upon them, and God so abundantly blessed their efforts in building up the Redeemer's cause, that on the 20th of November, 1767, the brethren in Spottsylvania were regularly constituted into a Baptist church, which was called Upper Spottsylvania, but now Craig's church, which has stood until the present time, and has become the mother of many churches.

Mr. Craig became a zealous and useful minister of the gospel. The Lord attended his efforts to extend the kingdom of Christ with his blessing, and made him instrumental in the conversion of many souls. During his ministry he was called upon to suffer persecution for Christ's sake. At one time he was confined in Culpepper jail for preaching the gospel, and at another in Orange jail for the same offence. Besides fines and imprisonment, he suffered as a minister of reconciliation many other hardships and privations. Mr. Craig was a man of considerable talent, a good preacher in his day, and a successful pastor. He removed to Kentucky in 1786, where he finished his work in 1808 and fell asleep. The following anecdote has often been told on Mr. Craig: He was once arrested as a disturber

of the peace: that is, for preaching the gospel, and carried before three magistrates, who would not hear any arguments for or against him but at once ordered him to jail. He said to the officer whose duty it was to conduct him to prison, "Elijah Craig will have no hand in putting Elijah Craig to jail—if you want him there you have got to put him there." Accordingly he voluntarily became helpless, and fell to the ground, and of course the officer was compelled to carry him to prison without Elijah Craig's assistance.

At this early date, Grassy Creek Church belonged to that party of Baptists who were denominated Separate Baptists, which cognomen originated in New England.

About the year 1740, a powerful revival of religion commenced in New England, under the labors of the celebrated Whitfield and other ministers of the gospel, such as had never before been witnessed in this country. It met with much opposition and obloquy, and was opprobiously called the "New Light Stir." The efficient agents in this great awakening, their adherents and sympathizers, as well as the converts, were denominated "New Lights," but afterwards they received the appellation of "Separates," without any reference to denominational distinctions; and, as a very large proportion of the subjects of this wide-spread revival became Baptists, this *sobriquet* [nick-name] was for many

years afterwards attached to a large number of New England Baptists and their descendants; and as the Baptists of middle and upland North Carolina descended from New England Baptists, they were known in early times by the name of Separates. All of these were for a considerable period embraced in the Sandy Creek Association. At this time, all the Baptists in the northeastern portion of North Carolina were called Regular Baptists, and were comprehended in the Kehukee Association. All the Baptists in the province were included in the two Associations—Sandy Creek and Kehukee. The members of the former are doubtless able to trace their pedigree from the Welsh Baptists, through New England; and the latter, very justly, claim their descent mostly through Virginia, from the same source. I think it could be shown, if it were necessary, from authentic history, that the Baptists of North Carolina received their ordinances from the Welsh Baptists, who claim a history that runs back to the first century of the Christian era.

For many years the Baptists were divided by these party names—*Separates* and *Regulars*—but after the churches in the eastern portion of the colony called Regulars, which had fallen into loose practices in church order and discipline, were reformed and remodeled to the true Baptist standard by the labors of Elders Robert Williams, John Gano, Peter P. Vanhorn, Benjamin Miller and others, they differed

from the Separates only in some small matters. There was but little difference in their views of doctrine and church order. The leading sentiments of both parties were Calvinistic. The principal objection of the Separates to union with the Regulars, was that some of their churches retained members in fellowship who were baptized before their conversion. On the other hand, the Regulars complained that the Separates were not sufficiently explicit in their principles, having never published or sanctioned any Confession of Faith. While this was true, still they claimed that as a Christian community they believed in the doctrines set forth by the Baptist Confession of Faith as truly as did the other party, but they did not approve of a church binding itself too strictly by a Confession of Faith, because it was liable to abuse, and thereby usurp too much authority over the conscience and endanger Christian liberty; and besides, they held that the Scriptures were a sufficient guide in all matters of religious faith and practice. The ministers of both parties met together in religious meetings and united in their efforts to build up the Redeemer's kingdom.) Thus co-operating and interchanging views awakened an earnest desire to remove every cause of separation and become more closely united as brethren in Christ. They discussed in a friendly manner the points of difference between them, which caused them to lay aside all their prejudices, and

compromise all their disputes; and, at length, the union of the two parties was happily effected; the party names by which they had been distinguished were dismissed and forever buried; and all the Baptists in North Carolina were afterwards known by the name of "Regular Baptists."

This church, in its commencement, entertained some peculiar sentiments which do not prevail at the present time. They believed that *the laying on of hands* should follow every case of baptism; but it seems that it was never observed as a rite that occupied a place so distinct in church economy as to make it necessary to constitute a true profession of Christianity; and therefore they did not make it a test of fellowship. In a few years they became satisfied that it was without divine warrant, and was accordingly laid aside as unauthorized by the New Testament.

The practice of the imposition of hands came into existence from mistaken views of such passages of Scripture as speak of the laying on of hands as a symbolic act that was used when a person was publicly set apart to some office, (Acts 6: 6,) or as the appointed sign by which the miraculous influences of the Holy Spirit were imparted in Apostolic times, (Acts 8: 17,) or in setting apart the sin-offerings under the Mosaic dispensation, (Heb. 6: 2.) In Hebrews, 6: 1, 2, the Apostle Paul speaks of the rudiments or first principles of the doctrine of Christ

as having been taught in the old dispensation by its rites and ceremonies. In the second verse he refers to the "laying on of hands." Remember the phrase, "not laying again the foundation," is understood before it, and by supplying the ellipsis, the passage reads thus: "not laying again the foundation of the laying on of hands."

It is evident that this passage does not refer to the imposition of hands, either in setting apart a person to office, or in conferring the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit, or to that of confirmation; for in neither case is there any doctrine taught by the act. But it is very clear that it alludes to what took place under the Old Testament dispensation. The laying on of the hands of the priests and of the people on their sacrifices which distinctly prefigured the imputation of sin to Christ, the great anti-type in every sin-offering. The Jews were accustomed to call this act *the laying on of hands*. The doctrine taught by this act, as one of the introductory elements of christianity, was the imputation of sin to Christ as the sinner's substitute. The Apostle was addressing Hebrews, who very well understood what he was writing about. He was instructing them as believers in Christ, that they should not go back to learn by this type of the old dispensation the first principles of this important doctrine in the Christian system, since Jesus, the Messiah, had come as

the true sin-offering, and bore our sins in his own body on the cross.

As to the *feet-washing* ceremony, it seems that it was observed to some extent, not, however, as a church ordinance, but only as a social ordinance in their individual capacity. As strict constructionists, they endeavored to follow out literally all the commands of the Master. The rite was founded on the injunction of Christ to his disciples, (John 13: 14): "ye ought also to wash one another's feet." But the practice soon fell into disuse, and feet-washing, as a religious ceremony, for many long years has been numbered among the things of the past.

In ancient times, the people of Palestine generally traveled bare-footed, or wore sandals—soles tied to the feet with strings—which did not protect them from dust and mud, so that when any person came from a journey it was customary to wash his feet as an act of kindness and hospitality. This service was usually performed by menials—servants of the lowest order. Our blessed Saviour, in washing his disciples feet, intended, doubtless, to teach us by his holy example, our duty to perform the humblest services for one another as brethren in Christ Jesus. The command is, at the present day, generally understood to mean that Christians should possess that humility which would lead them to perform the lowest act of kindness to the very least of the saints, if it were necessary for his comfort and happiness,

and not simply and literally washing each other's feet, when there is no need of performing such an act, which seems to partake somewhat of the nature of "a voluntary humility." Christians should imitate the spirit of Christ, and imitate his example in humility, in deeds of love and kindness, in order to promote the welfare of his followers.

This church, besides the office of the deacons, retained for many years that also of lay-elders. They were not ruling elders in the Presbyterian sense of that term; for they did not exercise any more authority in its government than any other member. It appears that the church has always been governed upon purely democratic principles. The elders aided the pastor in the discipline of the church, and attended to such other matters as are usually assigned to the deacons. They were held to be just about the same in office; the difference seems to have been more in names than in anything else.

The principal authority for ruling elders in the church is claimed to be found in Rom. 12: 8; I Cor. 12: 28, and I Tim. 5: 17.

The phrase (Rom. 12: 8,) "He that ruleth (let him do it) with diligence," does not point out any particular office, but evidently refers to certain endowments which God bestows upon individual christians, and which qualify them to be guides and leaders among the brethren. In the passage which contains the phrase, the Apostle was speaking of

the various gifts which God by his grace imparted to different persons for the edification of the church, that each one should be satisfied in his place and with his work, and endeavor to improve his talents, whatever they might be, for the advancement of Christ's Kingdom in the world. There is no proof that the Apostle in the phrase, "he that ruleth," (*ho proistamenos*—literally, *he that presides*,) meant the office of lay or ruling elders.

The word "governments" (I Cor. xii: 28—Gr. *Kuberneseis*) is thought to designate the office of ruling elders, but it would seem that nothing more can be made out of this word than a reference to a class of Christian men, found in almost every church, who are qualified by wisdom and grace to guide, as pilots, the people of God, not as officers invested with authority to rule the church of Christ, but simply as members possessed of piety and prudence.

The passage, (found in I Tim. v: 17) "Let the elders that rule (preside) well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine," is appealed to with much confidence as affording scriptural authority for the office of ruling elders, as distinct from that of preaching elders. But an observation or two will be deemed sufficient to show that it does not really give any warrant for such an office in the church. The most that can be claimed from the passage under consideration seems to be only an inference which has no

foundation in fact; for an inference, to be legitimate, must have for its base an established fact. The divine institution of such persons as lay or ruling elders in the church of Christ cannot be found in the Holy Scriptures. According to the New Testament there are only two classes of officers in the Christian church—elders, pastors or bishops, and deacons. The word (Gr. *præstotes*) translated rule, literally means *preside*, and very clearly points out the official character of the pastor, who presides not as a ruler but as a shepherd to watch over and guide the flock committed to his charge. The phrase *double honor* refers not so much to that affection and esteem which are due to ministers of the gospel as it does to their proper maintenance. They who labor in word and doctrine are justly entitled to a liberal and comfortable support, especially those who are entirely consecrated to the pastoral work. All the elders that rule well should be counted worthy of “double honor”; that is, a competent support. But who ever heard that lay or ruling elders claimed or received a maintenance from a church as its officers. That ministerial support was chiefly referred to by the phrase “double honor,” the 18th verse, which follows the one under consideration, puts beyond question: “Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn.” And, “the laborer is worthy of his reward.”

It is an observable fact that about this time there

were many instances of individuals in various parts of the country who had never heard Baptist preaching, but who, having been awakened by divine grace, or recently converted, came to the conclusion from reading the Scriptures, and from what they had heard of the Baptists, that they held the true doctrine, and practiced the ordinances in their original simplicity, and being so anxious to know more about them, they would travel from one to two hundred miles to attend their meetings, to learn the way of the Lord more perfectly. Take the following as an example: About the year 1770 there lived in Albemarle county, Va., a young man who, after much painful anxiety, was brought to a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus; and having examined the New Testament he saw the duty of believers' baptism, and having heard of the Baptists who practiced it, he felt desirous of becoming intimately acquainted with that denomination; and hearing of an Association to be held at Grassy Creek Meeting-house, determined to attend, although it was nearly two hundred miles from his residence. Having attended that meeting, and ascertained more accurately the doctrines and practices of the Baptists, and believing them to be in accordance with the word of God, regardless of the frowns and persecutions of a wicked world, he was baptized upon a profession of his faith in Christ, and went on his way

rejoicing. He became an eminent minister of the gospel, known as Elder Benjamin Burgher.

It may not be out of place to observe what revival measures were then employed, and how such meetings were conducted. (At the close of his sermon, the minister would come down from the pulpit and while singing a suitable hymn would go around among the brethren shaking hands. The hymn being sung, he would then extend an invitation to such persons as felt themselves to be poor guilty sinners, and were anxiously enquiring the way of salvation, to come forward and kneel near the stand, or, if they preferred to do so, they could kneel at their seats, proffering to unite with them in prayer for their conversion. After prayer, singing and exhortation, prolonged according to circumstances, the congregation would be dismissed to meet again at night at the meeting-house or at some private residence, either for preaching or in the capacity of a prayer-meeting. They held afternoon or night meetings during the week, or several nights during the week. In these night meetings there would occasionally be preaching, but generally they were only for prayer, praise and exhortation, and direct personal conversation with those who might be concerned about their soul's salvation. In seasons of religious awakening, large crowds would attend these meetings, which were blessed in the conversion of many souls. It was not uncommon for

the brethren, and especially the sisters, to give expression to their feelings in outbursts of joy and praise; but it appears that they were free from those wild and fantastic exercises which prevailed in many other places.) It seems that protracted meetings as now held, and what is termed the anxious seat system, did not come into use at Grassy Creek till about 1825 or '30. I would remark in passing, that after a careful examination of the church records running back more than *a hundred and ten years*, and from an intimate relation with it as pastor for nearly *thirty*, I am convinced that as large a proportion of the converts, that have united with the church under the present revival measures, which have been practiced for more than *fifty years*, are as consistent church-members and as faithful in maintaining an exemplary Christian character, as those did before the anxious seat system was employed. The anxious seat, like everything else that is good, is liable to abuse, but that is not a sufficient reason why its prudent use should be abandoned.

While the *manner* of conducting revival meetings then differed, in some respects, from that of the present day, yet then, as now, in effect it was the same. They were called *big* or *great* meetings, which are but other names for protracted meetings. An entry is found on the church records, showing that "a great meeting commenced on the 23d of July, 1775,"—the year before the Revolution—which resulted in adding 18 members to the church by baptism.

SECTION VI.

History of Grassy Creek Baptist Church,
derived from the Church Book,
with remarks by the
Compiler.

I have not been able to find any record of its proceedings from its organization to 1769.

In 1770, Charles Harris, who had been acting as church clerk for several months previous, was elected to that position, which he held for more than twenty years. From which I infer that the first clerk of the church had either died or emigrated, and by whom its earliest records were lost.

At this date, Elder James Reed was the pastor, Richard Harris, William Graves and Thomas Barnett were the deacons, and Samuel Whitehead and Sanders Walker the lay elders. Wm. Graves, Richard Harris, Wm. Knight, Wm. Allen, Robert Coleman, Jonathan Johnston, Charles Harris, Alexander Walker, Samuel Whitehead, and Sanders Walker, appear to be among the most prominent and useful members of the church.

The following entry was made on the 6th of June:
“The church appointed brethren Richard Harris, Wm. Graves, and Jonathan Johnston, to go with

Elder Jeremiah Walker to Alexander Walker's meeting-house to sit as a church on the 9th of June for the purpose of receiving members." They subsequently reported that they had discharged the duty imposed upon them, having "received and baptized *six* members." (The membership was large and much scattered over an extensive region, as there were no other regularly constituted Baptist churches nearer than Dan River, in Halifax county, Va., and Sandy Creek, in Guilford county, N. C.)

On the 14th of October, 1770, the Sandy Creek Association, which embraced all the Separate Baptists in North and South Carolina and Virginia, convened at Grassy Creek meeting-house, Granville county, N. C. Richard Harris, Samuel Whitehead, and Wm. Graves, were, by the appointment of the church, members of this body. This wide-spread Association was accustomed to transact none of its business, except by a unanimous vote.) If any measure was proposed for action, and there arose a difference of opinion in regard to it, they tried to effect unity by arguments, and if these failed, they united in prayer for the removal of every cause of dissent, but when both arguments and prayer were unavailing, they would frequently appoint the next day for fasting and prayer to secure, if possible, perfect unanimity. (The very first business introduced at this session produced dissension, which resulted by mutual agreement, in the division of the Asso-

ciation, and which, for the sake of convenience, if for no other reason, ought to have been done before this time. It appears that the question, in regard to which there was so much disagreement, was the jurisdiction which the Association was assuming over the churches, and thereby infringing upon their individual rights. While all agreed that a church was independent and complete in itself, having full power to transact its own business, without being amenable to any other ecclesiastical body, still some contended that a church had also the right to transfer its authority to an Association, but others maintained correctly that a church, as Christ established it, could not alienate its right to independent self-government—that its authority is inherent and cannot be transferred to any other ecclesiastical body whatever.) Thus, being greatly disturbed by disagreement, on account of the sad mistake into which many had fallen in regard to church independency, they were not able to proceed with their business.

*Congreg.
independence*

“They appointed the next day for fasting and prayer. They met and labored the whole day, and could do nothing—not even appoint a Moderator. The third day was appointed for the same purpose, and to be observed in the same way. They met early (the third day) and continued together until three o’clock in the afternoon, without having accomplished anything; a proposal was then made that the Association should be divided into three dis-

tricts, that is, one in each State. To this there was a unanimous consent at once." See Benedict's Hist of the Bap., p. 649.

The churches in South Carolina united to form what was called the Congaree Association, those in North Carolina retained the name of Sandy Creek, and the Virginia churches united under the name Rapidann, usually called the General Association of Separate Baptists of Virginia.

At this time the Baptists in their Associations gave but little attention to points of order, or the manner of conducting business. They spent their time principally in preaching and exhortation. They recounted their labors in the Redeemer's cause, the success which had crowned their exertions, and their prospects for future usefulness. These religious exercises and thrilling narrations were well adapted to inflame the hearts of the brethren with holy zeal, and urge them forward with renewed energy in their self-denying labors for the glory of God and the salvation of sinners.

Grassy Creek church, after the division of the Sandy Creek Association, associated with the Virginia brethren, first in the General or Middle District Association till 1788, then in the Roanoke till 1794, when the Flat River Association was organized. Since that time it has been a member of that body.) The records of the church show that they have, from the beginning, steadfastly maintained

the doctrine of church independency, and held that an Association was only an advisory council, which possessed no authority whatever over the internal affairs of a church.

It is painful to be compelled to state that on the 21st of November, 1770, Elder James Reed, the pastor, was excluded for unchristian conduct from the fellowship of the church. Elders Jeremiah Walker and John Williams, having been called on as helps, or as a council, were present to aid the brethren in this serious difficulty.) This was a safe and prudent course, which ought to be pursued in all perplexing cases of church discipline, especially those in which ministers of the gospel are involved. It is a sad reflection, that a man who had been so preëminently useful as a herald of the cross should be guilty of actions so inconsistent with his high calling, and in violation of God's holy word, that the church over which he presided as its spiritual guide could not, in faithfulness to the Master, do otherwise than excommunicate him from fellowship.

Charge!

Within two years after this unhappy affair he gave satisfactory evidence of his repentance, and was restored to the communion of the church, and soon afterwards to all the functions of the gospel ministry; and at length he was again chosen pastor and served the church with fidelity for a great many years,) beloved by the brethren and blest of

- ✓ God in building up the cause of Zion. (During the interval, Elder Samuel Harris of Va., who was so highly distinguished in his day for his eloquence and usefulness, served the church as its spiritual guide.

In 1771, the meetings of the church were regularly held through the year, and the ordinary business pertaining to such a body was transacted. In what light the church viewed the holding of erroneous opinions in doctrine by any of its members, may be distinctly seen in the following extract from its records: "Hezekiah Tabor was called upon to show cause why he should not be excommunicated for holding unsound principles, (false doctrine), but he neglecting to hear the church, is therefore excommunicated." The church had previously labored with this wandering brother, and tried to convince him of his errors, and induce him to abandon them, but in vain. He obstinately refused to retract, and of course there was nothing left in his case for them to do but to exclude him from fellowship. "A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition reject." (Titus iii: 10). A heretic is one who maintains unsound religious principles, especially denying some fundamental doctrine of the gospel. The church, as the guardian of God's truth, is bound, after warning him of his error, and exhorting him to retract, if he still refuses to return to the faith of the gospel, to exclude him from her

fellowship. The doctrine of the gospel is uncompromising, requiring an individual to believe the whole of it to be a true Christian. The faith of the gospel is one and undivided. The church must maintain the unity of faith:—"For there is one body, one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism." (Eph. iv:4, 5.) Some Scriptural truths are less fundamental than others, and some things in regard to which Christian men may innocently entertain different views without impairing the unity of faith.

On the 26th of Sept., 1772, "brethren Richard Harris and William Cockril were delegated to go to Bute (now Warren) county, to settle and regulate church matters there." Subsequent to this date, I find the following entry on the Church Book: "At a meeting in Bute (Warren) county, the church, believing that God had called Jonathan Johnson to the work of a deacon, put him to the work and ordained him." In what part of Warren county, N. C., this arm of Grassy Creek Church was located, I do not know, but it is more than probable that it was at or near the place where the church now called Tanner's is situated, and out of which it was formed.

On the 28th of November, "the church received a petition from the brethren worshipping at Blue Stone, requesting the pastor and elders to meet with them on the first Friday, Saturday and Sunday in December, to consider the propriety of constituting

them into a church." This branch was found to be sufficiently matured as to justify its regular organization, which was accordingly done at the time above mentioned. Blue Stone (now Bethel) church was located in Mecklenburg county, Va., some eighteen or twenty miles north of Grassy Creek Meeting house.

In 1773, at a church meeting March the 5th, the following query was presented and answered :

Query : "Should a private transgression be made public while there is hope of recovering the offender ? Answer : No."

There is, perhaps, no rule of church discipline more frequently violated than the one embraced in this query. "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between *him and thee alone*," &c., (Matt. 18: 15.) If this command of Christ were strictly obeyed by his professed followers, how many personal difficulties would be adjusted without reaching the public ear, to dishonor religion in the eyes of the world, and how many church troubles would be prevented, which often distract and destroy the peace of the brotherhood.

The passage in the 18th chapter of Matthew points out the course which should be pursued in regard to personal, private offences, with such distinctness that any reasonable man can, if he will, understand it, and every church should demand of its members strict conformity to its divine require-

ments; and should any one fail to act according to these directions given by the Saviour, he ought to be subjected to the censure of the church for such failure.

In June, 1774, the following query was offered, discussed, and answered: "Whether a member who absents himself from the Lord's Supper, without giving some reason for it, is not liable to the censure of the church? Answer: He is liable."

The Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ, and committed to the charge of the churches, to be observed by them as a sacred memorial of his sufferings and death until his second coming. Every member in full fellowship is solemnly bound by the relations which he professes to sustain to Christ, and which he does actually sustain to the church, to partake of the Holy Supper, whenever the church to which he belongs thinks proper to celebrate it; consequently, any member who voluntarily and persistently absents himself from this standing, gospel ordinance, should very justly fall under the censure of the church for the culpable neglect of duty and disobedience to the command of Christ,—"Do this in remembrance of me." There are some humble, sincere christians who, feeling their unworthiness, have been deterred from participating at the table of the Lord from erroneous views of that Scripture (I Cor. 11: 29) which says: "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh

damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." The word "unworthily" modifies the eating and drinking, and not the person who performs these acts. It refers not to the character of the participants, but the *manner of eating and drinking* at the Lord's table. The Corinthians had desecrated and profaned this sacred institution by making it a carnal feast of intemperance and excess. The term, "damnation" means condemnation or judgment, not in reference to eternal punishment, but those temporal judgments with which God chastised his offending servants who so wickedly perverted his holy ordinance.

In 1775, Elder James Reed being pastor, the church was blessed with the spirit of grace, and many precious souls were converted and added to its number, (baptisms) occurring at almost every regular meeting throughout the year.

The following is the first instance on record of any member being dealt with for dancing :

On the 24th of September, "brethren Henry Howard and Lemuel Wilson were appointed to admonish sister J—— C—— for living an immoral life, such as dancing," &c. On the 24th of November, "the committee reported that they had dealt with sister J—— C——, and had also cited her to the church. She being present, was called on by the church to answer to the charge. She owned the allegation, but said she found no repentance, (that

is, she was unwilling to give up dancing.) She then not being found to hear the church, was, therefore excommunicated."

Social dancing for amusement is not only unscriptural, but it is positively and specifically forbidden by the word of God.

"Envyings, murders, drunkenness, *revellings*, and such like, * * I tell you * * that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (Gal. v: 21.) "For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked * * in excess of wine, *revellings*, banquetings," &c. (I. Pet. 4: 3.) "Revellings" (Gr. *kōmōi*, dancings in merry making, a jovial festivity with music and dancing) specifically designate such feasts as were connected with music and dancing. There can be no doubt about the Apostles Paul and Peter using the term "revellings" to denote the exercise of dances with music, as classed with the "works of the flesh," and wholly inconsistent with the Christian profession. Paris leads the fashionable world in dancing as well as in dress. The most popular dances in fashionable circles come from that corrupt source of extravagance and skepticism. It is true, that many amiable young ladies and gentlemen, who are the victims of custom and fashion, resort to these places of amusement and revelry, where excess and frivolities reign, and where the conscience is hardened, the affections debased, the passions en-

flamed, time wasted, and God forgotten and dishonored. Can any Christian, who is acquainted with God's word, and can appreciate the value of the immortal soul, view such scenes of dissipation as harmless? But there are many who denounce the public ball, but favor the private parlor dance. The difference is only in degree, and not in the nature of the exercise. If the ball dance is wrong the parlor dance is wrong also; for the latter naturally leads to the former.

There are some parents claiming to be Christians who wish to have their daughters trained in a dancing school, to be taught how to be graceful—that is, how to stand and walk, and how to place their hands and feet. This is only a subterfuge of folly. To whom is this important trust committed? To, perhaps, some French infidel dandy, or some foppish pretender, of bad morals and vicious habits. Is this the way to train them for God and Heaven? Alas, how many young church members are drawn away from the path of rectitude and piety by the fascinations of the giddy dance! It drives out of the heart the love of God and his holy religion. Its effects are evil, and only evil. Can a church of Christ tolerate dancing in its members and be faithful to its great Head? If they love dancing better than they love the Saviour and his church, they should undoubtedly be excluded from its fellowship.

and permitted to go back to the world to which they truly belong.

In 1776, the Declaration of Independence was signed and proclaimed to the world.

Nov. 16th, "brother Aaron P. was called upon to give his reasons for not communing. His reasons not being satisfactory to the church, his case is referred to the next meeting."

Dec. 14th, "brother P. came before the church and made satisfaction for his disorder, and all censure being dismissed, he is restored."

This instance is given to show the strict discipline which, at this date, the church maintained.

In 1777, Feb. 8th, the church, having transacted its regular business, considered the question, "whether the bar to communion between this church and the Regulars, called Bennett's Church, on Grassy Creek, could not be removed; but the church not being fully agreed, it was referred to the next church meeting for further consideration."

March the 8th, "the last reference was brought forward, whereupon Bro. Samuel Whitehead arose, and reported that he, with several other brethren, met in conference with Bennett's Church, and that their order and discipline were exactly as ours, and thereupon the church unanimously agreed, as there was no difference in our order there should be no bar to communion, and they gave each other the right hand of fellowship."

From this extract it will be seen that Grassy Creek church was far in advance of the great body of Separate Baptists in forming a union with the Regular Baptists. This was not effected until 1787, ten years later by the Virginia Baptists, at Dover Meeting-house, and by the North Carolina brethren at a still later date.

"On the 13th of July, 1777, the church held a conference meeting on the river to receive and baptize members." At what particular point where this meeting was held I am not able to determine, but from the names of the persons received and other circumstances, it was doubtless on Dan river, in Mecklenburg county, Va. There was evidently a branch of this church in that section, which was regularly constituted in 1778 into what is known as the Buffalo Baptist church.

From 1778 to 1785, the records show nothing worthy of remark, except that the church, during the war of the Revolution, in spite of its injurious effects upon morals and religion, maintained its standing, kept up its stated meetings, and sustained the regular ministrations of the gospel. While some churches were swept away by the storm, and others scattered and so reduced in number as to have scarcely an existence, yet Grassy Creek church, though suffering much by declension in common with others, survived the war, still retaining comparatively a large membership of earnest Christians.)

During the years 1786 and '87, the church enjoyed a gracious and continuous work of grace, surpassing in extent, power and influence, any other revival with which it had perhaps ever been visited. Quite a number were baptized and added to the church, and among the number were several who became ministers of the gospel.

This Church held meetings on Island Creek to receive and baptize members, where she established a branch, from which arose Island Creek church, which was regularly constituted in 1820.

In 1789, Elder Reed, having served the church successfully for more than a *quarter* of century, and being now full of years, retired from the active labors of the pastorate, bearing with him the affections of the people among whom he had so faithfully toiled. Elder Henry Lester was then chosen pastor, who served the church for several years, acceptably and efficiently. During this year a very precious revival of religion was experienced and many were converted and added to the church.

The Roanoke Association* met with this church May 16th, 1789. The ministers present were, Sam. Harris, Moderator, John Williams, Clerk, Reuben

*The Roanoke Association was formed in 1788 out of the Middle District. This wide-spread institution included all the churches in Mecklenburg, Halifax, Pittsylvania, and other counties in Virginia, and Granville, Person, Caswell, Rockingham, and other counties in North Carolina.

Pickett, Thomas Vass, John Atkinson, James Reed, James Watkins, George Roberts, William Dodson, James Hurt, and others. Here they resolved on *two things*: *first*, to have a seminary to educate preachers; and *secondly*, to gather materials for a history of the Baptists of Virginia. The proceedings of this Association prove two things: first, that the early Baptists did believe in education; and secondly, the anti-missionaries are wrong for calling themselves "Primitive Baptists." In 1793, the Roanoke Association again held its session with this church.

In 1790, '91, '92, the church was in a prosperous condition, maintaining strict discipline, as the following query and answer will indicate: "Query: Does the word of God tolerate Christians to be at balls and the assemblies of the wicked?" The church voted unanimously, "No.") The followers of Christ are required to "abstain from all appearance of evil." He, therefore, who attends balls, and the gatherings of the wicked, not only acts inconsistently with his profession, but voluntarily goes into temptation which is incompatible with that petition in the Lord's prayer which he is taught by the Saviour himself to offer: "Lead us not into temptation." The church at this time censured any of its members "for being at balls, or weddings where fiddling and dancing were carried on."

The 4th Saturday in January, 1793, Bro. Charles

Harris, who had served the church as its Clerk for more than twenty-three years, being full of years, resigned that office, and Bro. William Royster was chosen to fill his place. At the same meeting, the following query was offered to the church for consideration: "Whether it is disorder or not, for a member of the church to stay at home, or go visiting on the Lord's day, when he might conveniently attend public worship?" The church voted unanimously, "It is disorder."

Church members, if they are what they profess to be, have given themselves first to the Lord, and then to one another, according to His appointment, for mutual edification and growth in grace. They are united together in the most tender and sacred covenant relations, solemnly pledged to God and each other, to walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord in brotherly love; and being bound by the laws of this holy compact, they are under imperative obligations to meet regularly and punctually for the purpose of promoting each other's piety and usefulness, the purity and discipline of the church, and in building up the Redeemer's Kingdom in the world. Can any member absent himself from the public worship of God and the assemblies of his saints with impunity, by remaining at home, or in social visiting on the Lord's day? It is the duty of every member to be present at all the stated meetings of the church, either for preaching

or business. The primitive christians were accustomed to meet every Lord's day to worship God in his ordinances, and christians of the present day should follow their holy example.

The following extracts from the records will show how this church regarded the rights of a church respecting the ordination* of ministers:

The 4th Saturday in September, 1793, "the church believing that Bro. William Richards, a licentiate, is called of God to preach His everlasting gospel, and finding his gifts profitable to the church, appoints Elders James Reed, George Roberts and Reuben Pickett to assist in ordaining him to the work of the ministry."

"The 4th Saturday in November, Bro. Richards

*The following is a copy of the credentials recorded in the church book, given to a brother at his ordination on the 14th of February, 1787, nearly 100 years ago :

"This is to certify that our beloved brother,, was, by the approbation of the Baptist church of Christ at, set apart by prayer and fasting, and the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery, to the administration of the word and ordinances of the Lord Jesus Christ. He having been called to the pastoral care of said church by the unanimous voice and the mutual consent of the same, takes the oversight of the church, manifested by giving each other the hand of fellowship in the presence of the Presbytery."

J..... R.....

G..... R.....

R..... P.....

was regularly set apart to the work of the gospel ministry, by Elders Reed, Roberts and Pickett."

The church has the inherent right to grant license to a brother to preach, and also to call for his ordination, when they think suitable, and invite a Presbytery for that purpose.

Sister S—— C—— "is censured for talking too freely. She makes confession, and is restored to fellowship." Church members should be very cautious how they speak of each other. They should be careful not to say anything that tends to interrupt the exercise of kind feelings, or hinder the growth of christian affection. The tongue, that unruly member, full of deadly poison, must be governed. Christians should strictly observe the divine precept, "Speak not evil one of another." They must abstain from all unkind remarks about each other, which have a tendency to excite resentment, wound feelings, or alienate affections, if they would act consistently with the principles of our holy religion.

Elder Thomas Vass was chosen pastor, and continued the pastorate until 1805, when he resigned, and removed to Stokes county, N. C.

In December, 1805, Elder Reuben Pickett became their pastor and continued till October, 1808, when Elder Thomas Vass was recalled to the pastorate, which office he continued to hold until 1814.

In 1798, the following query was presented and

answered: "Query: Is it right at this day for ministers to receive and baptize persons within the bounds of another church? Answer, No."

Many Baptist ministers had, at an early period, been in the habit of baptizing converts who desired it, wherever they found them, upon their individual responsibility, and giving them letters of commendation to any Baptist church to which they might be disposed to apply for membership. This loose way of receiving and baptizing members was then justified upon the ground that there were but few churches and they widely separated from each other. It was claimed to be a matter of necessity, but the practice was continued by a few ministers for a number of years, greatly to the annoyance of some of the churches, when there was no good excuse for such looseness. (Baptism is a church ordinance, and should be administered by church authority.

From 1808 to 1813, while I find nothing deserving any special notice, still it is worthy of remark in passing, that the church appears to have been in a healthy condition, and retained an excellent and useful membership.

In 1814, Elder Thomas Vass, who had been the spiritual guide of the church for many years, now retires from the pastorate, full of years and good works; and Elder Elisha Battle was chosen as his successor, which office he retained some five years.

The church seems to have prospered under the ministry of this devoted servant of God.

Thomas Vass, jr., was appointed clerk in the place of William Royster, who resigned the office on account of the infirmities of declining age. He had faithfully served the church as clerk for more than twenty years.

During the years 1819 and 1820, the church was blessed with the evangelical labors of Elder Robert T. Daniel, that distinguished man of God, whose efforts were so signally blessed in extending the Redeemer's Kingdom among men. In 1821, Elder William B. Worrell was elected pastor, and entered upon the duties of his office, which relation he sustained until 1824.

In 1824, Rev. Thomas D. Mason, a teacher of vocal music and a licentiate of Brier Creek Church, Chatham county, N. C., having located in the vicinity and united with the church, was called to the pastorate and ordained to the ministry. He served the church in that capacity until 1827, when Elder Samuel Duty became their pastor and served the church for one year.

Thomas Vass, Jr., having resigned the Clerkship, James Hester was appointed to that position in his stead.

In 1829, Elder James King, having been chosen to the pastorate, entered upon his duties and continued to serve the church in that relation until

November, 1846, when he resigned the care of the church. During the long pastorate of this earnest, pious minister of Jesus, the church was blest with many gracious seasons of revival, and numbers were added to the church by baptism.

In 1832, Thomas Hester was elected Clerk in the place of James Hester, deceased.

In 1833, the original meeting-house (a large frame building) having become dilapidated by age—having stood the corrodings of time more than three-score years and ten—the brethren erected a new and commodious house of worship, some two hundred yards from the old site, in a beautiful grove on the public road.

As early as 1829 a Missionary Society was formed in this church and collected during the year nearly a hundred dollars for the cause of missions.

*In 1838, an effort was made by Elder Stephen Chandler, a leading anti-missionary preacher of the Country-Line Association, to lead Grassy Creek church into Anti-ism, but without success. The church not only discountenanced the movement, but they promptly declared by a vote of the church, "that Elder Stephen Chandler should not preach in their meeting-house, believing he was sowing discord among the brethren." After this repulse, he preached for awhile in what was called the "Log-meeting-house," some three miles distant, but meeting with little or no encouragement, and making no

converts to his anti-views, he discontinued his labors, and from that time until the present (1880) they have not been disturbed by any other preacher of the anti-mission party.

The Anti-mission Baptists have assumed the name of "*Old, or Primitive Baptists*," an appellation to which the history of Grassy Creek Church shows very distinctly they have no just claim. Indeed, they are a *modern sect*. Baptist history proves conclusively that there never was a body of Baptists who were opposed to missions until about 1825.

The first missionary society ever formed by the Baptists of North Carolina, so far as the compiler knows, was organized at Cashie Meeting-house, in Bertie county, in June, 1805, within the bounds of the Kehukee Association. It was called "The General Meeting of Correspondence." It continued in existence until the 26th of March, 1830, when it was merged into the Baptist State Convention. The General Meeting was confined in its operations to supplying the destitute with the gospel in our own State; but the Baptist State Convention enlarged upon its operations—embracing Foreign Missions, Ministerial Education, &c.

It can be shown from history beyond any question, that the Kehukee and Country-Line Association, two of the oldest and most prominent anti-missionary Associations in North Carolina, were, up to 1827 and 1832, committed to the mission work.

They sent delegates to the General Meeting of Correspondence, and contributed to its funds. In 1816 Elder George Roberts, a leading minister of the Country-Line Association, was the Moderator of this Missionary Society, and Robt. T. Daniel was the agent. Elder James Osbourne, of Baltimore, sometime about 1830, came into North Carolina, visiting in the churches, selling his books, and preaching—or rather making war upon Bible, Tract, Sunday Schools, Temperance and Missionary Societies—zealously diffusing anti-missionary sentiments among the brethren, wherever he traveled, which resulted in discord and division. Under his influence many were led astray, and induced to take a dead stand against all benevolent enterprises, in which Christians were engaged for the spread of the gospel and the welfare of mankind. His influence, like the fatal simoom of Arabia, withered the spirit of benevolence and arrested all efforts for the spread of the gospel. Elder Osbourne is regarded with much propriety, as the *Father of Anti-ism* in North Carolina. The writer of this saw and heard him preach at Chatham, Va. His sermons were full of abusive vituperations, ridicule and dogmatism. He was a man of good address, genteel in his appearance, and possessed of a good deal of native talent, with a large measure of self-esteem, egotism and conceit.

The great body of the Baptist denomination has

ever been in favor of benevolent effort. David Benedict, the Baptist historian, when near the close of a long life, devoted to the investigation of Baptist history, says: "The further down I go into the regions of antiquity, the more fully is the missionary character of all whom we denominate our sentimental brethren (Baptists) developed. *Propagandism* was their motto and their watchword. They seldom went alone, but two and two was the order of their going out; and such was the ardor of their zeal in their hazardous vocations, that no ordinary obstacles could alarm their fears or impede their progress. As nothing of this kind appears among the opponents of the missionary enterprise, I cannot, with my views of duty as an honest historian, apply to them the term ("Old, or Primitive Baptists") in question, as I fully believe they misapprehend their own character in this matter."

The Baptist State Convention met with Grassy Creek church, Nov. 1st, 1839. Six Associations, viz: Sandy Creek, Raleigh, Cape Fear, Goshen, Beulah, and Flat River, and thirty-two churches and societies, were represented by delegates. Gen. Alfred Dockery was elected President; Thomas Meredith, Charles W. Skinner, and Samuel Wait, Vice Presidents; Wm. H. Jordan, Corresponding Secretary; James McDaniel, Recording Secretary; and A. J. Battle, Treasurer.. Bro. John Stovall was the delegate from Grassy Creek church, and "Messrs. Ven-

able, Barnett, Speed, Overby, Clack, Downey, Stovall and Hester," were the committee of arrangements. They were thanked by name in a resolution of the Convention, "for the kind and hospitable manner in which the delegates and visitors were entertained." The introductory sermon before the Convention was, in the absence of the appointee, preached by Elder "John Armstrong, lately returned from Europe." Elder Sam'l Wait submitted the report on Home Missions, which recommended the employment of *five* missionaries by the Convention, "one to labor wholly within the bounds of the Chowan Association; one to travel within the bounds of the Neuse and Tar River Associations; another to supply the churches composing the Goshen and Cape Fear Associations; and the other two to occupy the remaining part of the State." The Convention, however, recommended the Board to appoint *ten* instead of *five* missionaries. The reports of two missionaries—Elders Richard Jacks and Robert McNabb—are given in the minutes. Bro. Jacks labored in the counties of Sampson, New Hanover, Duplin, Wayne, Lenoir, Pitt, Craven, Carteret, Bladen, and Ashe, and collected \$102.69. Bro. McNabb labored in Craven, Chatham, Moore, Randolph, Granville, Orange, and other counties. "During the whole time," he writes, "I was engaged in the service of the Convention, I have travelled 201 days, preached 218 sermons, rode more than 1,400 miles,

baptized 59 persons, and collected \$51.75. The Treasurer's report shows contributions for Home (State) Missions, \$573.54; Foreign Missions, \$1,081.74, nearly twice as much; and for Education, \$534.39. Total for the year, \$2,189.69.

After the adjournment of the Convention, the N. C. Bible Society met in the same house, Nov. 4th, 1839, in its annual session. T. Meredith was appointed President; Wm. H. Jordan and S. Wait, Vice Presidents; David S. Williams, Cor. Sec.; A. J. Battle, Rec. Sec.; and A. Dockery, Treas. This Society was auxiliary to the American and Foreign Bible Society, and reported collections amounting to \$148.59. Among its members for the year were John Stovall, Jas. Overby, T. B. Barnett, and others, who belonged to Grassy Creek church and community.

No 5800

In November, 1846, Elder King resigned the care of the church, and Elder Robert I. Devin, who was laboring in the bounds of the Flat River Association as a missionary of the Baptist State Convention, was invited by the church to fill the vacancy. Satisfactory arrangements having been made with the State Mission Board to that effect, he supplied the church as pastor until October, when his connection with the Convention was dissolved; and having been unanimously called to the pastorate, he, in November, entered fully upon the duties of his office.

During the year 1847, the church experienced a

very precious work of grace, and quite a number of valuable members were added to the church by baptism. Elder D. continued to be their under-shepherd until November, 1858, when he resigned and moved temporarily to Florida. During the years 1850 and '51, revivals of religion of unusual power were enjoyed under his ministry.

On the 4th Sabbath in September, 1850, Elder D., the pastor, baptized fifty happy converts in that old noble stream which flows near the house of God, from which it received its name, which has become hallowed by its sacred use, and in which, perhaps, a thousand believing souls have, by his hands, been plunged beneath its yielding waves. It was a bright autumn day. A crowd of unusual size early assembled on its lovely banks to witness the solemn ordinance. It was indeed an impressive scene—so deeply imprinted on memory's page—that, perhaps, time itself will never efface. The young, the old and middle aged, in glad obedience to their Master's will, went down into the water and were buried with their Lord in holy baptism, many of whom became exemplary Christians and valuable church members; and while some are still lingering on the shores of time, eminent for piety and usefulness, awaiting the Master's summons, others have crossed the river and are now upon the other shore, enjoying its rest and its rewards.

On the 23d of February, 1850, Bro. John E. Mon-

tague was, according to a unanimous vote of the church, ordained to the full work of the gospel ministry by Elders Servetus A. Creath and R. I. Devin.

In November, 1858, Elder Moses Baldwin took the care of the church, and continued in that relation until November, 1859, when he surrendered his charge, and Elder R. I. Devin was recalled, and again became their pastor, which office he held until November, 1862, when he gave up his charge and removed to Forsyth county, N. C.

In November, 1862, Elder Robert H. Marsh became pastor of the church, which position he held until October, 1865, when he resigned and removed to Chatham county, N. C. During his term of service, the church prospered, a gracious revival was enjoyed, and a number of valuable accessions were made to its membership by baptism.

In November, 1865, Elder R. I. Devin, having been again recalled, entered upon the duties of the pastorate, which he has continued to perform up to the present time, (1880.) Elder D. has gone in and out before this flock, as their under-shepherd, from 1847 to 1880, excepting *four* years—in all more than 29 years.

The church, under the ministry of Elder D., has experienced about *twelve* gracious revivals of religion, but the most remarkable, as well as the most extensive, were those of 1850 and 1866.

In 1869, Bro. Thos. Hester, who had discharged

the duties of Church Clerk for *thirty-seven* years, on account of declining age, resigned his office, and Bro. Bridges T. Winston was chosen in his stead, which station he still holds, (1880.)

In 1879, the church determined to repair their house of worship. The building having become old and somewhat antiquated, it was repaired and remodelled in accordance with modern taste, which having been handsomely painted, presents not only a beautiful appearance, but it is in reality one of the neatest and most comfortable meeting-houses now to be found in the country. Love for God and his cause, and reverence for his house and worship, ought to be sufficient to influence christians to beautify the sanctuary of the Lord, "the place where his honor dwelleth." A good, comfortable house for divine service, speaks well for the morals and refinement of the community in which it is located, and reflects favorably upon the church and pastor that build it

Grassy Creek church has ever sympathized with the great mission work, in its various departments, and was one of the first churches in North Carolina to contribute of their means to aid in sending the gospel to heathen lands. May she, as a church, ever live and continue to assist, with increasing liberality, the glorious work of extending the Redeemer's cause until the whole earth shall be filled with His glory.

Since this church began to be founded, nearly *four* generations have passed away, but still she has, amid changing scenes and rolling years, maintained a happy standing among the daughters of Zion. She has ever maintained a strict and wholesome discipline, especially was this true in her early movements.

The pastors with whom she has been blessed, with few exceptions, were men of God, sound in doctrine, and devoted to the work of the ministry. And it also appears that she has never been much troubled with "itching ears"—that love of novelty and variety—which demand frequent changes, but on the contrary favored and sustained long pastorates.*

It is difficult at this day to make out a complete list of the churches which have sprung from this old mother church; for from her originated nearly all the churches in the surrounding country. The following churches were formed wholly or partly of members from this church: Meherrin, Bethel, Buffalo, and probably others, in Va., Tabb's Creek, Shearman's, Tanner's, Island Creek, Olive Branch, Amis' Chapel, Hester's and Mountain Creek in North Carolina.

List of the Pastors of Grassy Creek Baptist Church,—
James Reed, Samuel Harris, Henry Lester, Thomas

*Four pastors—Elders Reed, Vass, King and Devin, have served the church about 100 years.

Vass, Reuben Picket, Elisha Battle, Robt. T. Daniel, Wm. B. Worrel, Thos. D. Mason, Samuel Duty, James King, Moses Baldwin, Robert H. Marsh, Robert I. Devin.

List of Ministers sent out from this Church (Licentiate or Ordained).—Sanders Walker, Wm. Creath, Wm. Whitehead, Wm. Richards, Zachariah Allen, Daniel Gould, Wm. B. Worrell, John E. Montague, George N. Pittard, and others.

List of Lay-Elders.—Samuel Whitehead, Sanders Walker, Henry Howard, Wm. Cockrill.

List of Deacons.—Richard Harris, Wm. Graves, Thos. Barnett, Sr., Jonathan Johnson, Charles Harris, Thomas Owens, Henry Hester, Samuel Allen, Jesse Barnett, George Hunt, Joseph Hart, George Norman, Francis Hester, Wm. Hester, Thomas B. Barnett, John Stovall, John S. Overby, L. B. Stone, George W. Pittard, James Hester, Thomas Hester, Richard Elam, S. Y. Ragsdale, B. T. Winston, Thos. J. Pittard, John W. Gordon.

List of Clerks.—Chas. Harris, Wm. Royster, Thos. Vass, Jr., James Hester, Thos. Hester, B. T. Winston.

SECTION VII.

Biographical Sketches of the Pastors of
Grassy Creek Baptist Church.

The author was anxious to present at least a brief outline of the lives and labors of all the ministers, who have been connected with Grassy Creek church, but several names, whose memory ought to be preserved, he has been compelled to leave out, because the needful information could not be obtained.

Much allowance must be made for a portion of the sketches which are given, on account of the scanty supply of materials out of which they were compiled.

The sketches of Elders Reed, Harris, Picket, Creath and Richards, are mainly taken from Dr. Taylor's "Lives of the Virginia Baptist Ministers," with some changes and additions, and that of Elder Daniel is condensed, with some alterations, from the one given by Dr. Purefoy in his "History of the Sandy Creek Association."

ELDER JAMES REED.

Although it appears that Mr. Reed lived and died in the neighborhood of Grassy Creek, and sustained the pastorate of the church for nearly thirty years, yet, I have not been able to collect but little information concerning him, besides what is given by Semple, Taylor and Benedict. He was probably born in Edgecombe county, N. C., in 1726. In early life, he was the subject of much alarm, under the consciousness of his guilt, as a transgressor of the divine law, but he did not submit to the sway of

the Prince of Peace until he was about thirty years of age, He was converted under the ministry of Rev. Daniel Marshall, and baptized by Elder Shubael Stearns about 1755 or '56. His spirit was stirred within him when he beheld the thousands around him exposed to ruin; and he at once lifted up his voice in simplicity and godly sincerity, proclaiming the gospel of Christ. Up to this period his opportunities for mental cultivation were very limited, but he assiduously applied himself to study, and under the instruction of his wife he became considerably improved. Although at the time of his entrance into the ministry he was in many respects unqualified to instruct in spiritual things, but as an evangelist he was very successful in winning souls to Christ. Indeed, his talent seems to have been peculiarly suited to this kind of labor. He traveled extensively, especially in the early part of his ministry, both in North Carolina and Virginia. In company with Elder Samuel Harris in one of his journeys, seventy-five, and in another, more than two hundred, were buried, by him, with Christ in baptism. He possessed a sanguine temperament, and in some things was enthusiastic—disposed to regard his impressions as immediately from heaven. Elder Reed was the first pastor of Grassy Creek church, and continued in that relation, with the exception of two or three years, till declining age disqualified him for the active duties of the pastorate. He was

instrumental in planting the church at Buffalo, Mecklenburg county, Va., to whose oversight he was called at its organization in 1778, which position he occupied successfully for many years. His labors in building up the church were greatly blest, and several extensive revivals were enjoyed under his ministry, and many precious souls converted to God and added to the Lord through his instrumentality. His death took place in 1798, in the seventy-second year of his age, having been more than forty years engaged in the ministry. His end was most triumphant—willing to leave the world and expecting to be with Christ. His last words in departing were: “Do you not see the angels waiting to convey my soul to glory?”

ELDER SAMUEL HARRIS.

Elder Harris sustained the pastoral office with the Grassy Creek people for about three years—that is, from 1770 to 1773. This distinguished minister of the gospel was unusually popular, and large crowds attended his meetings.

Col. Harris, as he was usually called, was born January the 12th, 1724, in the county of Hanover, Virginia, but in early life settled in Pittsylvania. Few men could boast of a more respectable parentage. His education, though not the most liberal, was very considerable for the customs of the day, and as he advanced in age, became a favorite with

the people, as well as with the rulers. He was appointed Church Warden, Sheriff, a Justice of the Peace, Burgess for the county, Colonel of the Militia, Captain of Mayo Fort, and Commissary for the Fort and Army.

His conversion was effected under the ministry of two young and illiterate preachers by the name of Joseph and William Murphy, at that time commonly called the Murphy boys. This occurred in one of his official tours to visit the forts under his care. Soon after he was baptized by Elder Daniel Marshall in 1758, who was then on one of his missionary journeys into that region. He commenced his ministerial course during the year succeeding his connection with the church. All his worldly offices and honors, with their accompaniments, were disposed of in a very summary manner under the influence of his new impressions. And as he was a man of considerable wealth, he at once went out in his new and ardent vocation at his own cost; and for about thirty years he was a self-supported missionary in nearly all the then settled parts of Virginia, and in many parts of North Carolina.

For seven or eight years after he began the work of preaching the gospel, his labors were mostly confined to Pittsylvania and the neighboring counties. It is remarkable that during this time, while he preached the word and exercised the pastoral rule, he had not been authorized by the church of which

he was a member to administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. This delay was, doubtless, owing to some peculiarity of sentiment which he entertained relative to the ministerial office. He was ordained in 1769, and began to administer the ordinances. He was considered a great man and shone conspicuously as a luminary in the church; and like the sun in his strength, he passed through the State of Virginia, displaying the glory of his adorable Master, and spreading his light and heat to the consolation of thousands. His success as an evangelist was most astonishing. The gospel, preached by him, was attended by the Spirit of God, and made effectual in the conversion of many souls.

Perhaps few men of the eighteenth century contributed more to extend the truth and ordinances of the New Testament than Elder Harris. He was in almost all respects well qualified to secure the attention of those who heard him. His manners were of the most winning sort. He scarcely ever went into a house without exhorting and praying for those he met there. As a doctrinal preacher, his talents were rather moderate, but at times he would display considerable ingenuity. His excellency consisted chiefly in addressing the heart, and perhaps even Whitfield did not surpass him in this respect. When animated himself, he seldom failed to animate his auditory.

His influence was deservedly extensive. He was

called to preside at most of the Associations, and other meetings for business which he attended.

In the struggles that took place between the Baptists and the established church, he was also honored to take a very prominent part. He was not, however, required by his Master to sustain the same fiery persecutions, which were endured by some of his brethren. His influence in society previous to his conversion, as well as his naturally fearless spirit, contributed to his advantage. It is not intimated that no sacrifices were made, or trials suffered by this man of God. He gave up all for Christ. Being in easy circumstances when he embraced religion, he had not only devoted himself, but almost all his property to religious objects. He had begun a large new dwelling house, suitable to his former dignity, which he, as soon as it was finished, appropriated to the use of public worship, continuing to live in the old one. After maintaining his family in a very frugal manner, he distributed his surplus income to charitable purposes. He also suffered persecutions. He was once arrested in Culpepper county, Virginia, and carried into court as a disturber of the peace. In court a Capt. Williams vehemently accused him as a vagabond, a heretic, and a mover of sedition everywhere. Mr. Harris made his own defence. But the court ordered that he should not preach in the county again for the space of twelve months, or be committed to prison. Mr. H. told them that he

lived two hundred miles from thence, and that it was not likely he should disturb them again in the course of one year. Upon this he was dismissed. From Culpepper he went down into Fauquier, and preached at Carter's Run. From thence he crossed the Blue Ridge and preached in Shenandoah. On his return he called at Capt. Thos. Clanahan's, in Culpepper county, where there was a meeting. While certain young ministers were preaching, the word of God began to burn in Col. Harris' heart. When they finished he arose and addressed the congregation: "I partly promised the devil a few days past at the court-house, that I would not preach in this county again in the term of a year. But the devil is a perfidious wretch, and covenants with him are not to be kept, therefore I will preach." He preached a lively, animating sermon. The court disturbed him no more.

On one occasion, in Orange county, Virginia, he was pulled down while he was preaching, and dragged about by the hair of the head, and sometimes by the leg. His friends rescued him. On another time he was knocked down by a rude fellow while he was preaching. But he was not dismayed by these or any other difficulties. He seemed never to have been appalled by the fear or shame of man.

Respecting the last moments of this servant of Jesus Christ but little is known. For some time previous to his death he was seized with an attack

of paralysis, from which he never entirely recovered. Though on this account his labors were much interrupted, he still continued, to the extent of his ability, to recommend to all around him the service of his Master. He was not willing to be an idler in the vineyard of the Lord. At length, after having seen more than *three score years and ten*, he took his departure about 1795, from this scene of toil and pain to receive a crown of life.

This sketch will be closed by one anecdote, which may serve to illustrate, to some extent, his entire consecration of heart and life to the service of God ;

“A certain man owed him a sum of money which he actually needed to defray the expenses of his family. He requested the debtor to pay him in wheat, as he had a good crop by him ; but the man replied that he did not intend to pay him until he was sued. Mr. Harris left him, meditating ; good God, said he to himself, what shall I do ? Must I leave preaching to attend to a law suit ? Perhaps a thousand souls will perish in the mean time for the want of hearing of Jesus. No ! I will not. Well, what will you do for yourself ? What ! I will sue him at the court of heaven.

“Shortly after this, Mr. H., passing by to a meeting, carried a receipt in full to the man’s house and gave it to his servant, desiring him to give it to his master. On his return by the house, after meeting, the man hailed him at his gate and said, ‘Mr. H. what did

you mean by the receipt you sent this morning?" Mr. H. replied, 'I meant just what I wrote.' 'Well, but I have not paid you,' answered the debtor. 'True,' said Mr. Harris, 'and I know also that you said you never would, unless the money came at the end of an execution; but, sir, I sued you in the court of heaven, and Jesus has agreed to pay me. I have, therefore, given you a discharge!' This operated so effectually on the man's conscience that in a few days he prepared and sent to Mr. H. wheat enough to discharge the debt."

ELDER HENRY LESTER.

Elder Lester officiated as pastor of Grassy Creek Church some two or three years, embracing the year 1789. He is said to have been a man of excellent character, an acceptable preacher, and a good pastor. The church records show that quite a number were baptized during his pastorate. He labored for a number of years in Charlotte county, Va., and was instrumental in gathering the church-at Ash Camp, which was constituted in 1803. He became their first pastor, which relation he held till 1808, when he removed to the west.

The materials which I have been able to gather are too scanty to compile anything like a biographical sketch of Mr. Lester. He was doubtless a native of Virginia, but where or when he was born, where or when he died, &c., I have not been able to

learn from any to whom I have applied for information. He is said to have been a man of remarkable personal appearance—uncommonly large, well proportioned and corpulent.

ELDER THOMAS VASS.

Elder Vass was among the earliest and most successful Baptist ministers of Granville county, N. C. The compiler, after making considerable effort to obtain information concerning his life and character, regrets his inability to give more than a very imperfect sketch; but he is not willing to pass over in silence one who devoted so many years of his life in preaching the gospel, and whose labors were so valuable in building up the Redeemer's kingdom among men.

But very little is known of his early life. He was born in King and Queen county, Va., about the year 1738, and entered the ministry before he came to North Carolina.

Elder Vass was twice married. By his first wife he had a number of children, but by his second marriage he had no issue.

At what time he embraced religion, or the circumstances of his conversion, or when he entered the ministry, cannot be definitely ascertained. Eld. Vass became the pastor of Grassy Creek church about 1790, which, excepting two years, he continued to serve with zeal and efficiency until 1814,

when the infirmities of old age made it necessary for him to resign the position. During his pastorate the church was generally in a prosperous condition, many refreshing seasons of grace were enjoyed, many souls were converted under his preaching, and many members were added to the church by baptism.

As a man, Elder Vass naturally possessed a strong and discriminating mind; and, without the advantages of literary cultivation he arose to a very respectable standing in the ministry. As a preacher, he was held in high esteem by the brethren as an able minister of the New Testament. He was well versed in the Scriptures, firm in his religious principles, and prompt in the discharge of his Christian duties. His discourses were of a doctrinal cast, but they were eminently practical in their tendency. He delighted to dwell on those truths which are most essential to be known. But, while he delighted to dwell on the sublime doctrines of Christianity, he also urged with earnest zeal prompt and unreserved obedience to all the precepts of the gospel. His religious views were sound and scriptural.

As a pastor, he was sincerely beloved by his church. He discharged the duties of the pastorate with fidelity and tenderness. In church government, as a disciplinarian, he had but few superiors. He would not allow irregularities or immoralities in the members to pass without notice or correction.

Elder Vass was a man of fine personal appearance—large and well proportioned, weighing probably two hundred pounds—very sociable and courteous in his manners. In the pulpit, his manner was solemn and dignified. His elocution was very good, with a voice of large compass and melody, which he controlled with considerable skill. He was naturally possessed of musical talent, which, having been cultivated, he employed with great effect in his public ministrations. One of his favorite hymns which he frequently sang, introductory to his pulpit exercises, was, “Blow ye the trumpet, blow,” &c.

Concerning the last moments of this honored and devoted servant of Jesus, the writer can say but little. For several years previous to his death his labors in the ministry were much interrupted by feebleness and disease, the attendants of age. About the year 1818, Elder Vass, having lived beyond the ordinary term of human life, being more than eighty years of age, full of years and full of hope, took his departure from this sublunary scene, to enter upon the rest that remains to the people of God. His body was interred in the family burying-ground, near Mountain Creek church, there to sleep in sweet repose until the morning of the resurrection, when the trump of God shall awaken him to immortality.

ELDER REUBEN PICKET.

Mr. Picket was born in 1752, in the county of Fauquier, in Virginia. In his 17th year his attention was awakened to eternal things, and after much disquietude of mind, he joyfully submitted to the righteousness of God. A short time after his conversion, he was baptized by Elder Samuel Harris, in the county of Orange, Virginia. His earliest efforts as a public teacher were made when he was not more than eighteen years of age. It might be justly regretted that the stores of knowledge were not then within his reach, and that his mind was not then placed under suitable training. Such advantages would doubtless have been gladly improved by him; but at that early period, the facilities for obtaining education were exceedingly limited. With such opportunities as he did possess, he sought to qualify himself for usefulness. Such were his desires to do good, that through many difficulties, he urged his way to testify to his fellow-men the gospel of the grace of God. He found opportunities of exercising his gift in exhortation, and shortly after he began to preach. He was eminently successful in winning souls to Christ.

At this early period in his ministry, he felt a great desire to travel with Mr. Harris, but being poor and knowing that unless he followed some secular calling for support, his embarrassment would

be great; this made him very unhappy for some time. Spreading his case before the Lord, this text came forcibly to his mind: "Go ye and preach the gospel, and lo I am with you alway." He immediately forsook all earthly employment, and travelled with Elder Harris, expecting to visit an Association in South Carolina. He was, however, detained by severe illness, and left by his brethren in a strange part of the world. His sufferings, both of body and mind, were extremely severe, but they were only the refiner's fire, purging off the dross, and leaving Mr. Picket, like tried gold, to shine with seven-fold more splendor. And after his recovery, he felt the smiles of God in a more abundant manner than he had ever before. He then commenced his ministerial travels in North Carolina and Virginia, disseminating evangelical truth in various directions. He was still only about twenty years of age. Young as he was, his talents were extensively useful. Many acknowledged him as the messenger of peace to their souls; and several churches were constituted through his instrumentality.

He had been the means of originating a church called Reedy Bottom, which was afterwards merged into Mayo, in Halifax county, Va., (now Bethel church, Person county, N. C.,) to whose oversight he was called at his ordination, which took place in 1772. He continued their pastor as long as he

lived; and in this relation he was characterized by his activity and faithfulness. He was not, however, confined in his efforts to this congregation. He served Grassy Creek church as their spiritual guide, from 1805 to 1808, efficiently and profitably. Other churches were frequently visited, especially in seasons of difficulty and trial. He possessed a peculiar talent for binding together the hearts of his brethren, and preserving peace in the church. Among the people of God he was universally beloved. No man in the Roanoke Association possessed such vast influence, and no one deserved it more. For many years in succession, he occupied the chair at their annual meetings, and always presided with dignity and to the satisfaction of all. His talents were not of the highest order, but they were of the useful kind. He addressed the hearts and sought to reach the conscience of his hearers. While he was not accustomed to astonish by the brilliancy of his thoughts, he rarely failed to produce a very deep and solemn effect. His appearance and manners were highly impressive. Elder Picket, in his person, was tall, rather slenderly built, of thin visage, of a pleasant countenance and very kind in his manners. Plainness of speech was the marked characteristic of his preaching. He was, in his latter years, subject to great depression of mind, arising from derangement of the nervous system, produced by serious injuries which he received by being over-

turned in a gig. From this accident he suffered much, and being confined at home for a long time, was greatly depressed. Some endeavored to jest him out of this state, but he grew worse. Being visited by a minister (thought to be Elder John Kerr) he told him all his sorrows. He, entering into Picket's feelings, reproved those who had ridiculed him, told him that he was really afflicted, and then addressing himself to Picket, expressed great commiseration for his condition, told him that God alone could help him, and proposed that they should unite in prayer. During this exercise his soul was lifted up, his gloomy feelings left him, and he was filled with joy, which continued until his death, which took place Oct. 19th, 1823.

The memory of this man of God is embalmed in the hearts of hundreds of the lovers of truth.

ELDER ELISHA BATTLE.

The writer has made considerable efforts to collect materials that would enable him to compile a suitable sketch of the life and labors of Elder Battle, but without success. All the information he has been able to obtain was gathered from the recollections of two aged friends, now living in the vicinity of Grassy Creek Church. They knew Mr. Battle well, and remember him very distinctly, but at this distance of time they can only furnish some information of a general character in connection with his

labors in Granville county, during a space of five or six years.

It is belived that Mr. Battle was born in Edgecombe county, N. C., about the year 1780. He moved to Granville in 1814 or 1815, and became the pastor of the churches at Grassy Creek and Tabb's Creek. After serving these and perhaps others, some six years, he removed to or near Raleigh, in Wake county. He was the compiler of a hymn book, which had considerable circulation among the Baptists in this region about the years 1816 and 1820. Mr. Battle was a married man and had children, but how many my informants do not recollect.

As a preacher and pastor he stood high in the estimation of the brethren. His manner in the pulpit was calm and deliberate, his style elegant, and his elocution smoothe and flowing. He is described as amiable in disposition, unassuming in manners, and exemplary in deportment, which united in forming a lovely character, and rendered him the subject of high regard by the people whom he served as pastor. In his person he is represented to have been a little below medium size, of genteel figure, attractive in appearance, with blue eyes, hair inclined to be light, and was somewhat deaf. He was reserved and polished in his manners, having enjoyed, it is thought, better educational advantages than was common at that day.

When and where he died the writer cannot learn but it is believed that in the prime of life the Master called him away from the sorrows of earth to the joys of Paradise.

ELDER ROBERT T. DANIEL.

Mr. Daniel was born June the 10th, 1773, in the county of Middlesex, Virginia. Soon after the close of the Revolutionary war, the family immigrated to North Carolina and settled in Chatham county. In 1796 he was married to Miss Penelope C. Flowers, a lady in whom he found those excellent qualities which prepared her to be a co-worker in his ministerial labors.

Mr. D. embraced religion in 1802, in his 29th year, and uniting with the church at Holly Springs, Wake county, N. C., was baptized by Elder Isaac Hicks. He was licensed to preach in April, 1803, and in July following was ordained to the full work of the ministry by Elders Isaac Hicks and Nathan Gully. His education was extremely limited, but he possessed extraordinary abilities, which were at once perceived and appreciated.

The church at Mount Pisgah was the first that shared his pastoral labors. After some years he moved to Rocky River, in Chatham, and took charge of the church at May's Chapel. While living here he served as pastor of the church at Grassy Creek, Granville county. From Rocky River he removed

to Saw Mill Church, Marlborough District, South Carolina. From that point he returned to May's Chapel. While here he accepted the call to the church in Raleigh, and removed to that city. From there he moved to Pitt county, and took charge of the church in Greenville. Thence he removed to the church at Black Creek, in Southampton county, Virginia. Thence to Bullfield, Greenville county, Virginia. He then moved to Tennessee, and itinerated for some time in the middle portion of the State. Thence he removed to Holly Springs, Mississippi. He finally settled in Salem, Mississippi, which he regarded as his home at the time of his death. He was, indeed, a sojourner, having literally no continuing city. This restless feature in his character was, in a great measure, the result of his naturally sanguine temperament. He was easily discouraged, and as easily induced to change his place by the prospect of greater usefulness at some other. No man had more of Christian urbanity and kindness, was more ardently beloved by his people, or more deeply regretted when he considered it his duty to leave them.

Another prominent characteristic of our departed brother, was an abiding desire to unite the people of God in evangelical action, by which they could accomplish more than in their separate capacity. The greater part of his life was spent either as a missionary or as an agent of some missionary society.

When not especially employed as a missionary or agent, the whole region of country, within from a hundred to two hundred miles of his residence, was frequently visited by him, and especially such places as gave indications of revival. In these excursions his labors were often attended with the most happy results.

In a letter to Dr. Howell he says: "During the thirty years since I commenced the work of the ministry, I have traveled for the purpose of preaching the gospel about 60,000 miles, and preached upwards of 5,000 sermons, and baptized more than 1,500 people. Of that number many are now ministers of various grades, but twelve are men of distinguished talents and usefulness, and ten, mostly through my procurement, are regularly and thoroughly educated.

Mr. D. was emphatically the friend of young preachers. Affectionate and sympathetic in his intercourse with them, he was ever ready to impart instruction, and encourage and sustain them by his countenance and influence. His advice was always in favor of a close and constant study of the Bible, joined with ardent prayer, humility and exclusive devotion to the glorious cause. The Bible and the human heart were his chief books. His manner was natural and affectionate. He possessed a tall and manly person, a countenance of the finest mould, intellectual and benevolent, a voice in which

was mingled the sweetness of music and affection. For many years the locks upon his brow were white as wool. His whole aspect and manner instantly enchained his hearers, and made them feel that they were in the presence of a great and good man. His piety was consistent, ardent, and cheerful. To his closing hour he retained his accustomed vigor of mind.

At Paris, Tennessee, on the 14th of September, 1840, in his 68th year, Elder Robert T. Daniel bid adieu to the trials and labors of a life consecrated to his Master's service, and entered into that rest that remains to the people of God, uttering as he left the shores of time, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

ELDER WILLIAM B. WORREL.

The subject of this sketch was born in Halifax county, North Carolina, about 1800. When he was some sixteen years of age he professed conversion and united with the Baptist church. His father being a very wicked man, was so enraged at his baptism that he whipped him most cruelly, which well nigh deprived him of his life. In mad fury he drove his bleeding, lacerated boy away from his dwelling upon the cold charities of a selfish world, to find a maintenance as best he could; but the youthful wanderer was guided by the unseen hand of Providence to the hospitable mansion of one who sympathized with suffering humanity, and whose

pious heart moved with pity by the sorrows of an outcast stranger, and beneath whose friendly roof he found shelter and protection. Young Worrel, in his ramblings, made his way into Granville county, and at length came to Island Creek Meeting-house on one of the days for preaching. The church had not as yet been regularly constituted, but stated services were maintained at that place, as a branch of Grassy Creek Church. After the services were closed, deacon Thomas Williams, having observed a youthful stranger in the congregation, sought an interview with him, and having learned something of his history, invited him to his home, which he thankfully accepted. He narrated to Mr. Williams the circumstances of his case, and showed him the still unhealed wounds, which he had received for Christ's sake. Mr. W. kindly extended to him the invitation to make his house his home, until he could find a more advantageous situation. Soon his generous patron became so favorably impressed by the evidences of piety and talent, which young Worrel exhibited, that he placed him at school* and boarded him gratuitously. During the year he began to exercise his gifts in public, which gave

*Mr. Worrel was put under the instruction of Rev. Mr. Wilson, a Presbyterian minister, who was then the Principal of a classical school at Williamsboro. He was so much pleased with the young man that he very generously taught him for three years without charge.

promise of eminent usefulness. Several persons were so favorably impressed with the young man that they proposed to join Mr. Williams in helping the struggling youth to obtain an education to prepare him the better to preach the everlasting gospel. He was continued at school two years longer, making commendable progress in his studies. Holding his membership at Grassy Creek, the brethren materially aided him, and particularly the sisters, in furnishing him with clothing. Their gifts were worthily bestowed upon a pious, noble young man, who was preparing himself for great usefulness in the service of his Master.

Mr. Worrel was ordained to the full work of the ministry about 1820. He became the pastor at Grassy Creek in 1821 and continued in that relation for several years, the Lord blessing his labors in the conversion of many souls to God, and adding many members to the church by baptism. In 1825 he preached at Midway, where his preaching was greatly blessed, and where he baptized quite a number. Elder W. was the first pastor at Island Creek Church, which was organized in 1820, with forty-two members from Grassy Creek. He probably filled that office ten years.

He was the means of originating the church at Hester's, to whose oversight he was called at its constitution, which took place in 1823. He continued to be their pastor for many years. He also served

as pastor the churches at Peach Tree, Maple Springs, Bear Swamp, and others. He performed the duties of the pastorate faithfully and to the entire satisfaction of the brethren. The churches under his care were generally prosperous. They experienced many precious and profitable revivals. His preaching was blessed of God in the conversion of many souls, and numbers were added to the churches by baptism under his ministry. The extent of his usefulness in the Master's vineyard, eternity alone will disclose; but doubtless many will, in that great day, hail him with joy as their spiritual father, who shall shine forever as stars in the crown of his rejoicing.

As a Christian man, he was greatly beloved. His deep-toned piety, and unblemished character gave emphasis to his public ministrations. As a preacher he stood deservedly high among the brethren as an earnest, faithful minister of the New Testament. He was a man of positive convictions. What he believed to be the truth of God, he boldly and fearlessly proclaimed, regardless of the frowns or smiles of men. He was consecrated to the great work of preaching the gospel to the children of men. In his person as a man, he was of medium height, rather slenderly built, of pale complexion, pleasant countenance, commanding voice, full of tender pathos, good mind, respectable attainments, and deep feelings.

Concerning the last moments of this servant of

God, the writer has not been able to obtain any accurate information. Elder W. died in the prime of life, in the midst of great usefulness, universally respected and lamented. His unblemished life and noble character had endeared him to all with whom he was acquainted. He died sometime about 1840, and was probably forty years of age.

ELDER JAMES KING.

The subject of this sketch was born in Surry county, Virginia, on the 6th of Sept. 1780. His parents were Randolph and Annie King, whose maiden name was Barker, of English descent and of high respectability.

When James was about five years old his parents died and he was made an orphan. After remaining several years in his native county in charge of a pious aunt, whose religious instructions made deep impressions on his infant mind which were never obliterated, he was removed to Granville county, N. C., and put in charge of Mr. Thomas Rix, a relative of intelligence and respectability. This was his home until he arrived at the age of sixteen years, when he was apprenticed for four years to a carpenter to learn the trade. At the age of twenty, having completed his term of apprenticeship, he went to work with energy, building houses, churches, &c., and soon laid the foundation for a competency; the dark cloud dispersed and the sun of prosperity shone

upon his pathway. In 1802, he united in marriage with Miss Margaret, eldest daughter of Wm. Alexson of Granville, N. C., with whom he lived forty-one years, and by whom he had eight children, five of whom survived him, and one of that number is a Baptist minister. The companion of his youth and the mother of his children having died, he was again married to Mrs. Martha P. Holloway, with whom he lived sixteen years, when he was again made a widower, and so remained until his death, which took place Jan. 16th, 1870, in his 90th year.

About the year 1807, Mr. King was awakened to a sense of his awful danger as a sinner in the sight of God, and was led to inquire earnestly for the way of salvation. He wept and prayed, and prayed and wept, until he saw and felt that he could do nothing more, and then by divine grace he was enabled to give up all for Christ. The plan of salvation was made very clear to his view, and his joy in deliverance from sin was very great.

Mr. King united with the Presbyterians and became an esteemed elder in that church. After the lapse of some twelve or fifteen years, his attention was called by his wife to the question: whether the Scriptures authorize *infant sprinkling* or not? He thoroughly and carefully searched the New Testament through, time and again, for proof, but in vain. But on the other hand he was convinced that the Baptists were right; still he strove to quiet his con-

science, and tried to remain satisfied without changing his church relations. But his love for Jesus and the obligation to obey him overbalanced every other consideration, and accordingly he determined to follow Jesus at all hazards. He united with the Baptist church at Bethel, Person county, N. C., in 1822, and was baptized by Elder Wm. Blair, of Pittsylvania county, Va. Bro. K. has often been heard to say, that "when I came out of the water, I left a heavy weight behind me."

Not long after his baptism he was licensed by the church to preach, and the next year the church called for his ordination. The Presbytery of the Flat River Association, in accordance with the request, met and ordained him to the full work of the gospel ministry in 1825 or '26.

Elder King fully and cordially embraced the sentiments held by the regular Baptists respecting baptism, church polity, &c. In his doctrinal views he was, what may be termed, a moderate Calvinist. His education was limited, but by studying the Bible and religious books, and particularly Fuller's works, he acquired a fund of useful information. His easy and persuasive elocution, his affectionate and earnest manner, engaged the attention of his hearers, and had he enjoyed the advantages of a thorough education, he would doubtless have been one of the first preachers of his day.

Not long after his ordination he accepted the pas-

torate of the churches at Bethel, Grassy Creek and Hester's. Olive Branch was shortly afterwards constituted into a church, and he became its pastor, and continued in that relation until a few years before his death. Buffalo, Ephesus and Mount Zion enjoyed his labors as pastor, the two last named, with the addition of Mill Creek, were gathered and constituted under his ministry. All of these churches he served for a number of years, some for a longer and others for a shorter period. His preaching was greatly blessed in the edification of believers and in the conversion of sinners.

During his pastorate the churches at Bethel, Grassy Creek, Hester's, and Olive Branch, experienced a revival of religion which continued without much intermission for five years. About the year 1844, he accepted the care of Buffalo church. The church in a short time was revived, and upwards of one hundred members were added, sixty of whom Elder King baptized at one time in about thirty minutes. He traveled extensively during the early part of his ministry, preaching from place to place with much power, accomplishing great good in the Master's vineyard.

Elder K. baptized, during his ministry, 1,500 persons, preached 4,500 sermons, traveled 75,000 miles, and read the Bible through fourteen times.

This man of God labored for the good of souls and for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause, until

he wore himself out preaching the gospel of Jesus, until, like the corn that is fully ripe and ready for the garner, he bowed his head and gave up the ghost. He is gone to reap his reward. His labors are ended, his sorrows are over, and his tears wiped away. The great battle has been fought, and the victory forever won.

The memory of those who have devoted their lives to promote the welfare of our race, should not be allowed to sink into the black waters of oblivion. They should have a place in the grateful recollections of posterity. While the body of our venerable brother reposes in the dust, his name and deeds, as a herald of the cross, are still fresh and fragrant with many who have enjoyed and been benefitted by his self denying labors.

ELDER MOSES BALDWIN.

This servant of God having been pastor of Grassy Creek church, is kindly remembered by the brethren who will be pleased to preserve a memorial of his character and labors as a minister of reconciliation. He now resides in Winston, Forsythe county, N. C., and is still actively engaged in the work of the ministry.

- Bro. Baldwin was born in Richmond county, N. C., Dec. the 4th, 1825, and was the third child and eldest son of Osborn and Mary Baldwin.

He professed conversion in July 1845, and united

with the church at Cedar Falls in October following. He was baptized by Elder Wm. Lineberry, who was then the pastor of the church.

In September, 1849, he was licensed by the church to the gospel ministry, and in January, 1850, he went to Wake Forest College to study for the ministry, where he graduated with distinction in June, 1856. Immediately after his graduation, he was appointed Agent for the Baptist State Convention, in which capacity he labored until December, when, having been called to the pastorate of the church at Hillsboro, he resigned the Agency and entered upon the duties of his office as pastor. In 1856, he was ordained to the ministry by Elders Hooper, Wingate, McDowell, Brooks, Walters and Skinner. In 1858, he removed to Oxford and took charge of the church in that town. On the 21st of April, in the same year, Bro. B. was married to Miss Addie L. Transon, a lady well qualified to aid him in the great work to which God had called him. In 1859, having resigned his care of the Oxford church he moved into the country, and took charge of a classical school, and at the same time he also served as pastor the following churches namely: Hester's, Mt. Zion, Amis Chapel and Grassy Creek. In November, 1861, he moved to Forsythe county, and became Principal of the Academy in Bethania, and likewise the pastor of Union Hill church in Davidson county, and Enon in Yadkin county. Bro. B. was in-

strumental in gathering the church at Mocksville, the county seat of Davie. He was their pastor some five or six years. Besides the churches already mentioned, he has served as pastor for a number of years, Mt. Gilead, Bear Creek, Eaton's, and is now serving the church at Red Bank, in Stokes county.

Soon after the close of the late war, he moved to East Bend, in Yadkin county, and took charge of the Academy at that place. The school was prosperous, and he taught successfully for a number of years and accomplished great good in promoting the educational interests of that region.

More than twelve years of Bro. Baldwin's life have been devoted to teaching, during which time he has taught a large number free of charge, and invariably gave tuition gratuitously to all young ministers who would avail themselves of the offer. The students whom he prepared for college usually stood high in their classes, and in the institutions which they attended. Many of his former students, in addition to those who became intelligent farmers, have taken, and are taking a high stand in the ministry, in medicine, and in law.

Bro. Baldwin is at this time (1880) engaged in putting into successful operation the High School of the Yadkin Association at Boonville, Yadkin county, N. C. He originated the idea, and is the prime mover in the enterprise. The brethren have put the Institution into his hands to manage its organi-

zation, and make it in all respects what its name implies, a School of High Grade.

Bro. Baldwin stands deservedly high as a good scholar, a good preacher, and a good educator of youth. May his useful life long be spared to labor for God and the welfare of mankind.

ELDER ROBERT HENRY MARSH.

Elder Marsh takes high rank among the preachers of the Flat River Association as an able minister of the New Testament, ready for every good word and work. He is a man of broad mental culture, having enjoyed superior educational advantages. He graduated at the University of North Carolina, and afterwards studied Theology at Greenville, South Carolina.

Mr. R. H. Marsh, the youngest child of Robert and Lucy Marsh, was born on the 8th of November, 1837, in Chatham county, N. C. He was baptized October 2d, 1856, and licensed to preach the gospel March the 6th, 1859. His first sermon was delivered on the night of the 10th of April following, from Acts xvii: 30, as a text. Two and a-half years afterwards he was ordained to the work of the Christian ministry. In the beginning of the late war the Governor of North Carolina appointed him to take charge of the 26th Regiment of State Troops as Chaplain. This position was held but a few months when he was superceded by a Confederate Chaplain.

In the spring of 1862 he removed to Oxford, and devoted the rest of that year to teaching. The next year he became the pastor of Grassy Creek, Mountain Creek, Tally Ho and Concord churches. After having served the church at Grassy Creek satisfactorily and successfully for *three* years, it became necessary, in the providence of God, for him to return to his native county. While at Grassy Creek, Elder Marsh was esteemed "very highly in love for his work's sake." After an absence of three years, Elder M. was recalled to Granville. He has labored extensively, with a large measure of success, among the churches of the Flat River Association. Bro. M. was instrumental in gathering the church at Enon, whose oversight he has maintained ever since its organization, and under his ministry it has become one of the most efficient churches in the Association. He now resides in Oxford, and is actively engaged in the great work of preaching the gospel. May his days be many and full of usefulness.

Biographical Sketches of Ministers sent
out either as Ordained or Licen-
tiate Preachers from
this Church.

ELDER SANDERS WALKER.

Mr. Walker was probably a native of Mecklenburg county, Va. He was a lay elder and a licentiate of Grassy Creek Church. He removed to Georgia about the year 1771. He was one of the constituent members of Kiokee Church, which was organized by Elder Daniel Marshall in 1772. This was the first Baptist Church ever regularly constituted in Georgia. Mr. W. appears to have been quite useful as a minister in that then frontier country. It is said that he was very zealous in proclaiming the gospel; and that he, with other licentiates, as co-laborers with Marshall, was efficient in gathering the scattered sheep of Christ into the fold, and in multiplying believers unto the Lord.

Elder Walker, who, by way of distinction, was called meek, having been ordained to the full work of the ministry by the Kiokee church, settled on Fishing Creek, in Wilkes county, Ga. Here he labored with marked success, preaching the gospel of the grace of God in regions round about him. There were in the vicinity a number of Baptists, who had either emigrated thither, or were the fruits of the

labors of Elder W. himself, in union with other heralds of the cross. These were soon gathered together, and in 1783 they were formed into a regular church, called Fishing Creek church, and it is presumed that Elder W. was their first pastor.

He was one of the first, as well as one of the most prominent, ministers in the formation of the Georgia Association, which was organized in 1784. He was honored at some of the meetings of this body by being elected to fill the Moderator's chair. He appears to have been a man of exemplary christian character, much beloved by his brethren, and useful in proclaiming the word of the Lord.

The writer of this regrets his inability, for the want of the necessary information, to sketch the life and character of this man of God, who has long since gone up to the home of the blest, to reap the reward of his toils and sacrifices to promote the coming and triumph of the Redeemer's kingdom.

ELDER WILLIAM WHITEHEAD.

Mr. Whitehead was born in Granville county, N. C., about the year 1756. He was the son of Samuel Whitehead, who was a lay-elder at Grassy Creek, a prominent citizen and an active, valuable member of the church. His parents were in comfortable circumstances, and consequently their son enjoyed better opportunities of education than ordinary at that day. Early in life William professed conversion,

and united with the church. He was baptized in December, 1774, by Elder James Reed. At what time he began to preach, the writer cannot learn, but probably soon after his baptism. He was dismissed by letter in 1778, and removed South, but to what point the compiler cannot determine, but it seems that he at length settled in the Pearl River Valley, in Mississippi, the middle portion of which was open to white settlers immediately after the Revolutionary war. This portion of Mississippi soon became very generally settled. Among the immigrants were a number of Baptists of respectability and influence. It is thought that Elder Whitehead was among the number, from the fact that he was among the first ordained ministers of that region. He appears to have been active and prominent in the organization of the Pearl River Association. He seems to have been a diligent and useful minister of the blessed gospel of Jesus, and accomplished much good in his Master's vineyard.

ELDER WILLIAM CREATH.

Mr. Creath was born in Nova Scotia, December 23d, 1768. His father immigrated to Granville county, N. C., in 1786, and became a permanent resident of the State. His son William, about twenty years of age, joined Grassy Creek church in 1789, and was baptized by Elder Henry Lester. The same year he began to preach Christ and him cru-

cified. Possessing promising talents, he was invited by Elder John Williams, a highly distinguished minister of the gospel of Lunenburg county, Va., to reside with him for the improvement of his mind. He remained under the instruction of this pious and talented man some two or three years, during which time he made considerable progress in knowledge.

Mr. Creath was married in 1791 to Miss Lucretia Brame, with whom he lived for more than thirty years in Mecklenburg county, Va. They had sixteen children, some of whom died in infancy.

Allen's Creek and Wilson's Creek churches arose out of his labors. He was for some time the pastor of Maloan's church, in Mecklenburg county. But for many years he was employed almost entirely in itinerating labors, making long journeys through portions of North Carolina, Virginia and Maryland. As a public speaker he commanded the attention of his auditors, and usually called out large congregations whenever he preached. He was an active and laborious minister of the gospel, but he does not appear to have been very successful as a pastor—owing to his itinerating habits, spending comparatively but little time at home with his churches. He was a very useful man, willing to spend and be spent in his Master's service.

Elder Creath was a man of talents and deep research in matters of divinity, but was thought by some to have been rather fond of treating on points

of religious controversy, and thereby exciting unnecessary prejudices.

He left home on the 4th of July, 1823, on a preaching tour in Eastern Carolina, from which he was not permitted to return. He was arrested by disease, and at the residence of Mr. John Blount, in Edenton, N. C., on the 9th of August, 1823, in his fifty-sixth year, he closed his earthly pilgrimage, and fell asleep in Jesus.

On this his last tour, it is said that he preached with unusual unction and power, as if struggling in the last battle, in full view of the Celestial City, and conscious of certain victory. As his joyful soul takes flight he sings: "Farewell vain world, I am going home," &c.

There is one other item that is worthy of special remark: all thirteen of his children whom he left behind, became members of the Baptist church, and three of this number ministers of the gospel.

ELDER WILLIAM RICHARDS.

Mr. Richards was born in Essex county, Virginia, in 1763, of highly respectable parents. At the age of eighteen he was brought to the knowledge of the truth through the instrumentality of the Baptists. His relations and friends were violently opposed to his uniting with that sect, everywhere spoken against, and resorted to every expedient to prevent it, but, having examined the Scriptures and learned

the path of duty, he was immovable in his determination, and accordingly united with the Baptist church in 1781. In following Christ he was caused to suffer many severe trials, but he bore them all with meekness. His deportment was so upright and consistent with his profession, that the mouths of gainsayers were stopped, and soon all were compelled to respect him as a good man. He very soon felt it to be his duty to preach, and at once began to exercise his gift in public. His earliest attempts were unpromising, and many were of opinion that he would never stand high as a preacher, but in this they were mistaken. He immigrated to North Carolina and settled in Granville county. The most of his first efforts were made while he was a member of Grassy Creek church. He was ordained at this church in November, 1793, by Elders James Reid, George Roberts and Reuben Picket. Having been invited by the Blue Stone (now Bethel) church, in Mecklenburg county, Virginia, to become their pastor, he removed into the vicinity of that church, and became permanently settled for life. He served as pastor several other churches. His labors were extended to different parts of Mecklenburg, Lunenburg and Charlotte for many years, to the joy and edification of the people of God. He was a good pastor. The church found in him an example of unaffected simplicity of character and Christian loveliness. They, with their pastor, were not only

prompt in their efforts to build up at home, but also liberal in their contributions to the cause of missions, and indeed to every benevolent enterprise that had the glory of God in view. He was an excellent disciplinarian. No abuses were allowed to remain uncorrected. His influence was great in the Meherrin Association, over which he presided as Moderator for a number of years. As a preacher, he was highly esteemed, not so much for deep thought or beauty of language, but for the peculiar simplicity and energy with which he exhibited scriptural truth. He was emphatically a preacher of the cross.

For several years before his death, feebleness compelled him to relinquish all pastoral connections. Still he loved the house of God, and would not forsake it as long as his strength would permit him to attend. At length the hour of his dismissal came, and found him ready. He joyfully committed the mighty interests of eternity into the hands of his divine Redeemer. On the 13th of July, 1837, in the 74th year of his age, and 50th of his ministry, he left the land of shadows and death for the climes of life and immortal blessedness.

ELDER ZACHARIAH ALLEN.

Mr. Allen was born in Virginia, Jan. 4, 1773. He was the son of Samuel and Mary Allen, who was Mary McCollister. In his early childhood his pa-

rents moved to North Carolina and permanently settled in the Northern part of Granville county, in the vicinity of Grassy Creek church, of which they were both worthy members—his father sustaining the office of deacon. No information worthy of notice concerning his early history has been obtained.

On the 29th of January, 1794, in his 22d year, Mr. Allen was united in marriage to Miss Rebecca Barnett, a lady of high respectability and piety, and through whose influence he was subsequently brought to a saving knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. Mr. A. united with the church at Grassy Creek, and was baptized on the 4th Sabbath in December, 1800, by Elder Thos. Vass. Soon after his connection with the church, such were his convictions of duty that he began to exhort his fellowmen to flee the wrath to come. As he continued to exercise his gifts, the brethren encouraged him to persevere, and licensed him for the gospel ministry. He preached at various points in the surrounding country with much zeal, God owned and blessed his efforts, and many were benefitted by his ministrations.

In 1808, Mr Allen moved to Lincoln county, N. C., where he remained until 1811, when he returned to Granville and settled for life in the south-eastern part of the county, some three miles from Wilton. The writer has no information concerning the

brother during these three years, but he was doubtless busily employed in the Master's vineyard.

In 1812, Bro. Allen was ordained by Elder James Weathers and others, at Cedar Creek church, Franklin county, with which he had united after his return from Lincoln county. The church at New Light, Wake county, enjoyed for many years his ministerial labors as pastor. He was instrumental in planting the church at Brassfields, which he served as pastor for twenty years. He commenced preaching at Corinth, in 1832, once a month, and continued until 1st August, 1835, when the church was regularly constituted. He was then elected to the pastorate, which office he held until 1842, when feeble health made it necessary for him to resign his charge.

He was instrumental in gathering the church at Fellowship, which he served as pastor for a number of years, very satisfactorily to the brethren. The churches under his charge were generally united in brotherly love and Christian affection.

Elder Allen was a man of strong mind and sound in doctrine, with a warm heart and flaming zeal, devoted to the Master's cause, full of faith and good works. A brother who visited him in his last illness says he found him "full of faith and the comforts of religion."

He died on the 20th of February, 1845, in the seventy-third year of his age, in full assurance of a

blessed immortality. Thus this eminent servant of God passed away, after spending a long life in the service of his divine Master. He was greatly blessed both temporarily and spiritually. He brought up a large family of children, ten in number, all of whom he lived to see profess conversion, and whom he had the pleasure of baptizing into the fellowship of the same church. When he baptized the last one he was so overwhelmed with joy that he exclaimed in the language of Simeon: "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation."

When old age and its infirmities rendered him unfit to perform the duties of the pastorate, he continued to visit the house of God, and preached whenever his strength would allow.

As a preacher, he was much esteemed, not for beauty of language, but for the earnest simplicity with which he exhibited divine truth. He labored extensively among the churches of the Flat River Association, and over which he often presided as Moderator.

ELDER JOHN E. MONTAGUE.

This brother lives at Bethel Hill, in Person county, N. C. Although he has passed the meridian of life, and is now on its shady side, still he is in the vigor of manhood, and actively engaged in the work of the ministry. He stands deservedly high in the

estimation of his brethren, as a faithful, zealous laborer in the Master's vineyard. Bro. M. was born near Oxford, the county seat of Granville, October 23d, 1818. Having been reared by pious parents, who brought up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and, as it might be expected, under such training, he was, at a very early age, the subject of many religious impressions; but he was not fully awakened to a true sense of his guilt and danger, and brought to feel deeply the necessity of a change of heart, until the summer of 1839. A short time after his conversion he united with the Baptist church at Corinth, and was baptized by Elder Zachariah Allen, in the 21st year of his age. Not long after his connection with the church, he became deeply impressed with the conviction that it was his duty to devote his life to the work of the gospel ministry. He suffered much mental anguish in considering the subject; and for a long time he was anxiously asking, "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?" in reference to the ministry. Being sensible of its solemn responsibilities, and his unfitness for that high calling, he shrank back at the thought of such an undertaking. He struggled with God in prayer, with many tears, to be released from the obligation, but still he felt: woe is me if I preach not the gospel. At length, having become fully satisfied that it was his duty to preach, and having received from his parents only a business

education, he felt the necessity of a better cultivation of his intellectual powers to qualify him for the great work of the gospel ministry.

In January, 1843, after consulting with his most judicious friends, and by the advice of that man of God, Elder Samuel Wait, involving no little worldly sacrifice, he connected himself, as a student, with Wake Forest College. At this institution of learning he remained two years, receiving instruction in literature, both secular and theological; for, at this time, by special arrangements, all the students were to a limited extent instructed in theology under the supervision of Dr. Wait and Prof. J. B. White.

After leaving college, and having exhausted his means, it became necessary for him to engage in teaching school for the support of his family. Bro. Montague continued in this business for a number of years, and at the same time preaching in many destitute places, with evident tokens of divine approbation. In passing, the writer, from long and intimate acquaintance with Bro. M's family, wishes to say that amid all the trials and sacrifices our brother has experienced in his vocation, his estimable wife has ever been to her husband a help-meet indeed, and has ever seemed to delight in aiding him in the great work of his life.

In 1848, Mr. M. moved to the vicinity of Grassy Creek and united with the church, where he holds his membership up to the present time.

In 1850, Grassy Creek church, by a unanimous vote, invited Elders Jas. King, S. A. Creath and R. I. Devin, the pastor, to meet on the 23d of February, as a Presbytery, to ordain Bro. John E. Montague to the gospel ministry. Bro. M. was publicly set apart to the full work of the ministry at the date above given.

In 1851, Bro. M. was called to the care of Aaron's Creek church, in Halifax county, Virginia. He continued in that relation nine years. His labors were greatly blest in building up the church, and adding to its membership by baptism. Under his superintendence, the brethren built a new house of worship, creditable alike to pastor and church.

In 1853, Elder M. accepted an appointment of the State Mission Board of the General Association of Virginia, to preach at Dryburg, Halifax county, Va. The following year a Baptist church was regularly constituted at that place. The Board continued to aid the church in supporting the pastor two or three years, when it became self sustaining. Bro. M. preached for this church thirteen years, the Lord crowning his labors with much success in the up-building of Zion, and in making large additions to its membership. In the meantime, a commodious meeting-house was built for prayer and praise and the public administrations of God's blessed word—a sanctuary unto the Lord.

In 1853, Elder M. became pastor of Bethel church,

Person county, N. C., and after serving the church ten years resigned the charge; but he was recalled to the pastorate in 1871, in which relation he has continued to the present time (1880). This old church, constituted in 1774, has recently built a new house of worship that reflects honor upon the community in which it is located. This church maintains a happy standing under the efficient labors of its devoted pastor.

In 1860, Elder M. was called to the pastorate of Musterfield church, Halifax county, Va., and after serving the church eight years resigned. His labors were attended with a large measure of success. Many souls professed conversion under his ministry and quite a number were added to the church by baptism.

In 1864, Elder M. took the oversight of Buffalo church, Mecklenburg county, Va., and sustained that relation until December, 1879—a period of fifteen years. During this time several very precious revivals of religion were experienced by the church, and many were added to its membership by baptism.

In 1867, Bro. M. was chosen by Clement church as their spiritual guide. After serving this church for a time he resigned his charge and became the pastor of Olive Branch church. Both of these churches are in Person county, N. C. Bro. Monta-

gue is still serving the Olive Branch congregation acceptably.

In January, 1854, Elder M. entered upon the pastorate of Mill Creek church, Person county, N. C., which office he still holds—a period of twenty-six years. Bro. Montague's labors in connection with this church have been abundantly successful. Its membership is now (1880) larger than it has ever been since its constitution, and yet there are but *two* male members belonging to it who were there when Bro. Montague took the pastoral care of the church. Great changes have taken place in Mill Creek church since our brother became their spiritual guide. The old hull of a house has disappeared, and a new, neat and handsomely painted one taken its place. The generation then living has nearly passed away, and another has arisen to take its place. The membership is mainly composed of the descendants of the brethren who have gone to the spirit land, converted under the ministry of its present pastor, and baptized by his hands.

In addition to his regular pastoral work, our brother has been accustomed to preach at different points, either statedly or occasionally—thus guarding the outposts of his various charges. In this way he has performed much gratuitous labor among the destitute, doing good service for the Master.



Date Due

APR 5 '26			
MAY 4 '26			
JAN 7 '30	NOV 9		
	NOV 04		
APR 6 '31	NOV 02		
Sep 17 '31	NOV 18		
OCT 19	1931		
	1931		
JUL 13 1938			
JUL 27 1938			
JAN 19 '46			
DEC 4 '51			
MAY 24 '51			
OCT 27			
FEB 15			
MAR 19 '73			
FEB 21			

Duke University Libraries



D00275633Q

Div.S. 286 D495H

66865

Devin

History of Grassy Creek
Baptist Church

DATE	ISSUED TO
FEB 15	Joe Lineberry

286 D495H

66865

SCHOOL OF RELIGION

